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ABSTRACT

This volume includes the first 15 papers in a 32-paper collection. After a prologue by Mkhululi David Graham Du Bois entitled "Seeking Truth in Research", the papers are: (1) "`Knowledge is Light, Knowledge is Power': African American Education in Antebellum America" (Christopher M. Span); (2) "Curriculum, Culture, and Power: Reshaping the Education of African Americans" (William H. Watkins); (3) "The Changing Faces of Education for African Americans after Brown: Equity, Excellence, Choice, Vouchers, and Privatization" (Frank Brown); (4) "Language, Race, and Schooling: A Conceptual and Historical Legacy of Educational Language Policies and Politics Affecting the Ethnolinguistic Minority Child of African Descent" (Rodney K. Hopson); (5) "Family and School Environments Working Together to Impact Academic Achievement in African American Adolescents" (DeMarquis Hayes and Michael Cunningham); (6) "Battling before Birth: Institutionalized Barriers to the Health and Well-Being of African American Children" (Jeanita W. Richardson); (7) "African American Violence Exposure: An Emerging Health Issue" (Alvin L. Killough, Wendy L. Webster, Valerie B. Brown, Eric Houch, Christopher L. Edwards, and Patrick E. Logue); (8) "Dashed Hopes and Withered Dreams: Alternative Schools for Boys who `Don't Fit In'" (Christopher Dunbar, Jr. and Reitumetse Obakeng Mabokela); (9) "From Classrooms to Cellblocks: African American Juveniles in the Justice System" (Carol Camp Yeakey); (10) "Sports, Opportunities, and the American Dream: Athletic Investment and Mobility Aspirations of Ethnically Diverse High School Students" (Amber Rodriguez and Jomills Henry Braddock II); (11) "`Leaving No Child Behind': Examining Issues of School Reform and Social Justice" (Beverly D. Epps and Harriet R. Morrison); (12) "Historical and Developmental Perspectives on Black Academic Achievement: Debunking the

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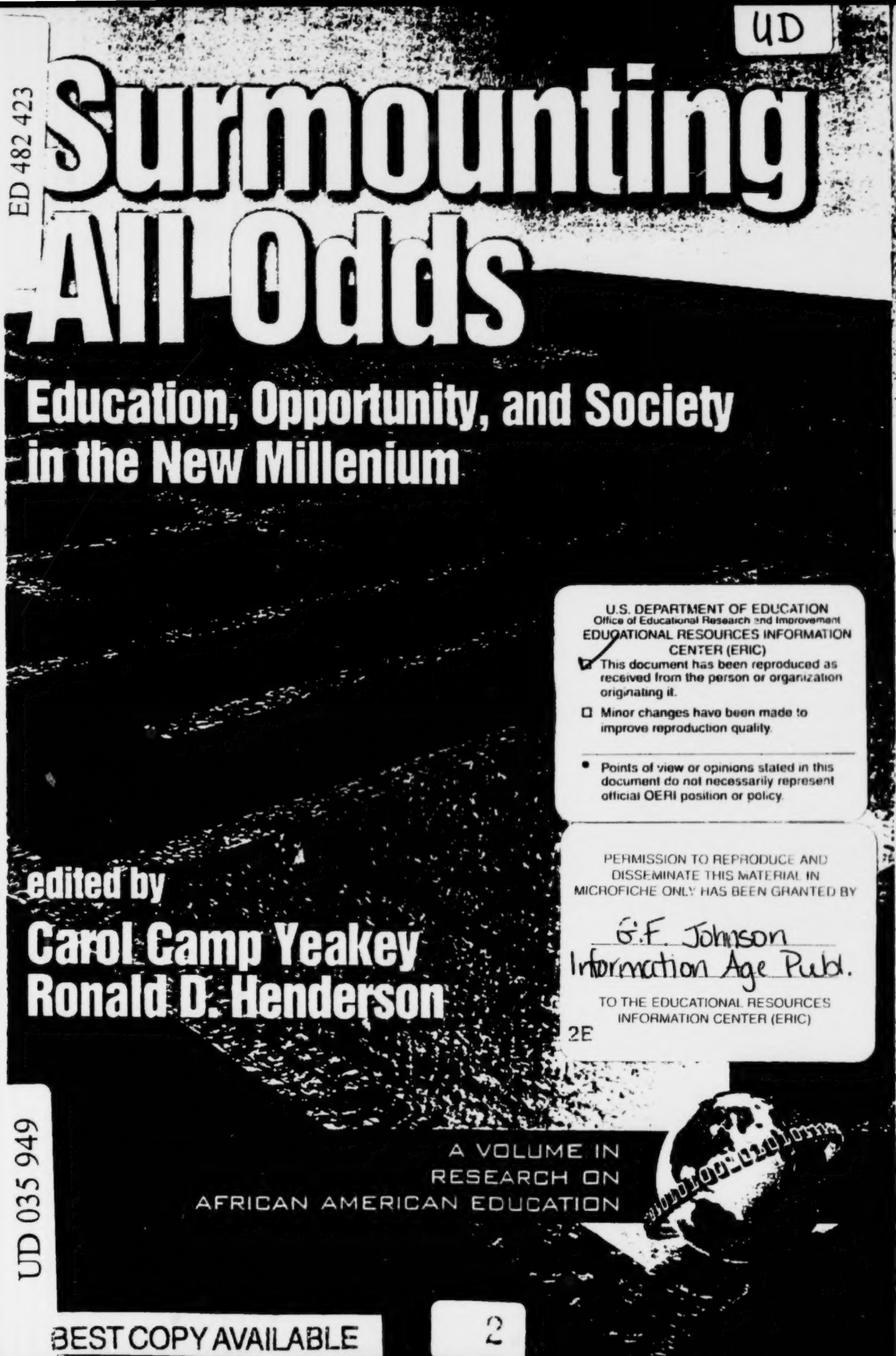

Surmounting All Odds

Education, Opportunity, and Society in the New Millenium

edited by

Carol Camp Yeakey
Ronald D. Henderson

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A VOLUME IN
RESEARCH ON
AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

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Surmounting All Odds

Education, Opportunity, and Society in the New Millennium

Volume 1

A volume in
Research on African American Education
Series Editors: Carol Camp Yeakey and Ronald D. Henderson

Surmounting All Odds

Education, Opportunity, and Society in the New Millennium

Volume 1

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To the late W.E.B. Du Bois
and the intellectual legacy he left for us all

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PREFACE

The publication of this volume marks the beginning of our new series, Research on African American Education. As we begin the year 2003, we are constantly reminded of the centrality of race and schooling in American society. Similarly, we are reminded of the acute sensitivity surrounding any discussion of the issue of race in America. We now know that the educational conditions of African Americans are due to a complex constellation of mutually reinforcing factors. Failure to appreciate this reality often causes policymakers, educators, and researchers to analyze systemic problems such as underachievement, zero tolerance, school dropout rates, unemployment, crime, punishment, and the overreliance on sports, among others, as unitary problems warranting unitary solutions. The new series Research on African American Education departs from that tradition and will produce scholarship demonstrating the complexity of social issues and the need for systematic, comprehensive approaches to fashioning solutions to the lack of educational advance of African Americans.

Our new series will provide volumes that examine some of the critical issues impacting upon the education and schooling of African American youth, from pre- through post-secondary education. Our challenge will be not only the scholarly production of knowledge, but the transmission of that knowledge to wider audiences. In so doing, we intend to question traditional assumptions and to analyze some of the intended and unintended consequences of those assumptions. To respond to this challenge, this series will not rely upon a single paradigm or discipline to render new understandings. Multidisciplinary approaches will be utilized. Thus, research written in the tradition of law, political science, psychology, his-

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tory, sociology, education, public health, and economics, among others, will be featured volumes of this series. To be sure, internal factors, that is, what goes on inside the institutional frame called schools, are of signal importance to the education of African Americans. However, so too are external factors, cultural contexts, and political dynamics, which serve as contributing variables that originate outside of the institutional frame, that serve to impede or advance African American schooling and education. In this series, we stress the centrality of race and schooling and to comprehend from both analytic and policy perspectives, the situations that increase and decrease the life chances and opportunities for African American youth.

Surmounting All Odds: Education, Opportunity, and Society in the New Millennium represents our inaugural volume. We hope you will read it, enjoy it, and more importantly, become better informed. Contrary to many volumes dealing with the topic of race, schooling, and education, this volume embraces the historical sensitivity of the topic as a starting point. While no one book can possibly cover all of the critical issues impacting African American education, we believe that this inaugural volume is but a beginning, for as a series, we have several other volumes, by other authors, in the writing and planning stages, which analyze some of the most daunting issues of the day. As coeditors, we trust that you will find this series as well as the ensuing pages of this volume both intellectually stimulating and enlightening.

—Carol Camp Yeakey
Ronald D. Henderson

PROLOGUE

Seeking Truth in Research and Scholarship[1]

Mkhululi David Graham DuBois
W.E. B. DuBois Foundation, Inc.

My father, the late W.E.B. Du Bois, the eminent, African American scholar/activist, wrote at the beginning of the 20th century in 1903, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line–the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." (Du Bois, 1968b, p. 12). What made the color line "the problem of the twentieth century" for Du Bois was its use by powerful forces in Europe and in North America to discredit and to undermine the democratic ideal: that the collective will of the people, all the people, freely arrived at and freely expressed, will produce the greatest good, a belief Du Bois held to throughout his long life. My father's remarks could well apply to the 21st century where race and the problem of the color line are still America's burden and have become the world's concerns. How this problem has influenced the generation of research and scholarship on Africa and her descendants is the substance of this Prologue.

The exclusion by Europe of Black peoples, that is, the peoples of Black Africa, from "all the people" of "the democratic ideal," in an attempt to justify the African slave trade and the institution of slavery, reinforced the division of the human family into those destined to rule and those destined to

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be ruled. This exclusion coincided with and assisted the rise of capitalism, colonialism's expansion, and the era of European, imperial hegemony. By the beginning of the 20th century, it was clear to Du Bois that European research and scholarship on Africa and the African, in the service of the African slave trade, colonialism, and imperialism, misrepresented truth, distorted reality, and ignored Black Africa's antiquity.

Such research and scholarship replete with omissions and distortions continue to dominate academe today. As a result, such misrepresentation is the basis for general education and popular media and cultural representations of Africa and Africans, not only in Europe and North America, but globally! Consequently, a major task of researchers and scholars of the 21st century is to correct the misrepresentations and distortions of European scholarship on Africa and her descendants in their interaction with the rest of the world, and to supply the missing truth of Africa's antiquity, particularly Africa south of the Sahara, prior to the African slave trade and colonialism's devastation of the African continent.

Those who engaged in and supported the European slave trade well into the modern era were required to provide a justification to counter the inevitable, humanist, antislavery sentiment emanating from the ideals and beliefs that accompanied the European Enlightenment. Despite evidence to the contrary, attested to by reports of early travelers and adventurers to the African continent and by surviving, pre-colonial records and archaeological and architectural antiquities, the image of the uncivilized and uncivilizable African savage was invented and widely propagated throughout Europe with the beginning of the African slave trade to justify that trade and the subsequent colonialization of Africa.

In order to succeed, however, some unchanging and unchangeable trait or mark was required to explain what made Africans fit only to be slaves. The only thing that truly distinguished the African from the European was color. In all other respects, there was no difference readily apparent. Thus, Black skin became synonymous with inferior, savage, uncivilized. In 1920, Du Bois wrote, "Ever have men striven to conceive of their victims as different from the victors, endlessly different, in soul and blood, strength and cunning, race and lineage. It has been left, however to Europe and to modern days to discover the eternal, world-wide work of meanness–color" (Du Bois, 1969, p. 42).

Du Bois understood that associating color and ethnicity with inferiority fundamentally and irreversibly undermined the democratic ideal. Not only was slavery and colonialism on the African continent justified, but White European hegemony, in a world four-fifths colored, was justified and made to seem inevitable.

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

European research and scholarship on Africa has for the past four centuries dominated academia as well as popular information and the media worldwide. That research and scholarship has, in the main, served to explain away and justify Europe's rape of Africa, the European slave trade, the institution of slavery in the Americas, and the exploitative colonial policies and practices of European powers in Africa. Du Bois's long-standing dream of an Encyclopedia Africana, directed and prepared primarily by African scholars, had as its stated intent to correct the omissions, distortions, and lies of European research and scholarship on Africa that for 400 years has provided the only image of Africa available to the world. It was this dream that at age 91 brought Du Bois to Accra, Ghana, from the U.S., on the insistence of the late President Kwame Nkrumah, to head the Secretariat for an Encyclopedia Africana. The project was established on the basis of the creation of regional committees of African scholars around the continent as chief contributors to the Encyclopedia directed by the Secretariat in Accra.

Since the death of Du Bois in 1963, this effort floundered, suffering from periods of inaction by the Accra-based Secretariat as a result of a series of political upheavals in Ghana, corruption within the Secretariat, disinterest on the part of African governments, and an almost total diversion by the current Secretariat from the original concept drawn up by Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, and the original leadership.

There are four areas of great importance in scholarship on Africa that European scholars either ignored, severely distorted, or deliberately lied about: (1) the African reality prior to the slave trade and European colonial exploitation, that is, Black Africa's antiquity and Africa's interaction with the ancient and medieval worlds; (2) the devastating upheavals on the African continent caused by the European slave trade of four centuries; (3) the actual conditions of life and work imposed upon the slave by the European and American slave traders and slave holders, particularly in the deep south of the U.S. and in the Caribbean, and the Middle Passage horror; and (4) the extent and nature of resistance to slavery by the slave.

The importance of these four areas lies in their relationship to the image created of the character of the African. To this day, that image suffers horribly as a result of the treatment by mainstream European and American researchers, scholars, and writers on Africa in these four areas. That treatment has contributed to and validated the assertions that the African is inherently inferior to the European, made by the evermore outspoken advocates of White supremacy in Europe and in North America today.

Surely committed democrats around the world must repeatedly ask themselves how it is that the people, that is, the electorate, in the loudly trumpeted democracies of North America, Great Britain, and Europe, stand by passively silent and thus approving as their leaders tolerate, participate in, and themselves initiate the most blatant violations of the human rights of the peoples of color throughout the world–in Central and South America and the Caribbean, in the Middle East and North Africa, in southeast Asia, and in the horn of Africa and throughout Black Africa.

The answer is found first in the belief, deliberately and skillfully propagated among Europeans and their progeny in the Americas, with growing intensity since the Vietnam War, that peoples of color, and most assuredly Africans and peoples of African descent, are inherently, irretrievably inferior in intellect, in ability, and in morality to Europeans and persons of European descent. And second, arrogant U.S. provincialism, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the demise of the alleged threat of communism, has been increasingly fed by an anti-Islamic religious fervor. Therefore, it is maintained that Europeans and peoples of European descent have a duty, indeed a Christian obligation, to protect peoples of color, both from themselves and the unscrupulous; the belief that the best of all possible worlds of the future is a world of unchallenged European hegemony.

Examine the news and information Americans and increasingly Europeans are provided about the peoples who inhabit five-sixths of the world, the Third World. When and if that five-sixths is covered by the media, it is to report and pontificate on a catastrophe–man-made or nature; a conflict–political, civil, or regional; or the bizarre, the exotic, the picturesque. Keep mainstream America and Europe convinced that this TV/media image of Black and colored peoples is the reality and several objectives are achieved. Most importantly, the alleged superiority of Whites or Europeans is proven; an elitist division within and between the communities of peoples of color is encouraged; the sting of the charge of White supremacy is greatly minimized; and the responsibility for the final resolution of "the problem" is placed on the victims.

It is thus that White (European) superiority, the assertion that colored peoples are inherently inferior to Whites, is being deliberately and skillfully used in the West to undermine the ability and the desire of masses of Americans and Europeans to include peoples of color as fully entitled members of the human family and thus deserving of the same human dignity, the same social justice, and the same human rights advocated for themselves. It is thus that the peoples of North America, and to a somewhat lesser extent the peoples of Europe, remain silent and unmoved by repeated violations of the human rights of five-sixths of humanity, endangering and undermining their ability to ultimately guarantee and defend their own human rights.

With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Du Bois asserted a special affinity he believed joined China and Africa; in his words, "a common heritage of wage slavery and contempt" that is the consequence of four centuries of European hegemony and imperial domination. On February 23, 1959, the morning after his 91st birthday banquet hosted by the late Premier Chou En Lai in Beijing, in a speech to Peking University students that was broadcast by Radio China around the world, but was directed to Africa, Du Bois declared:

> China after long centuries has arisen to her feet and leapt forward. Africa arise and stand straight, speak and think! Act! Turn from the West and your slavery and humiliation for the last 500 years and face the rising sun.... China is flesh of your flesh and blood of your blood. China is colored and knows to what a colored skin in this modern world subjects its owner...China does not need American nor British missionaries to teach her religion and scare her with tales of hell. China has been in hell too long, not to believe in a heaven of her own making...." (1968b, p. 407)

In his third and last autobiography, *A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life From the Last Decade of Its First Century*, published after his death, Du Bois counseled Africa,

> But, above all–Africa, Mother of Men–your nearest friends and neighbors are the colored peoples of China and India, the rest of Asia, the Middle East and the Sea isles, once close bound to the heart of Africa and now long severed by the greed of Europe. Your bond is not mere color of skin, but the deeper experience of wage slavery and contempt. (1968a, p. 404)

FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

For African Americans, the underlying lesson is clear. Your education must be grounded on the assumption of the need to reeducate, to cleanse minds of the lies, the half-truths, the distortions and omissions of Africa and Africans that five centuries of European hegemony have produced. African American education has the central task of restoring pride in our African heritage, a heritage that had its beginning with the dawn of human civilization; a heritage that predates all the great world civilizations–of the East, of Central and South America, and of the latecomers, Europe. African American education must fill minds with the truth of Europe's rise to greatness by the rape of Africa's human genius and rich-beyond-belief natural resources.

African American education must break away from the traditional educational methodology that has perfected the art of miseducating the world about Africa and her descendants. African American education and the research that sustains it must be bold, innovative, and courageous in its determination to undo the harm five centuries of European domination have done. The task is urgent. Four-fifths of humanity–the peoples of Central/South America and the Caribbean; the peoples of the Arab Middle East and the Arab Gulf; the peoples of Soviet Asia, all India, all China, and the Pacific South East, including the Pacific Islanders and the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand; and all Africa–are today rising up and challenging European/North American domination, demanding their fair share of the "action." Their victory is inevitable. African American education has an intellectual as well as activist role to play, an honorable role in the struggle for that just, prosperous, equitable, and peaceful world we all desire.

With all the challenges that lie ahead of us, I both welcome and celebrate *Surmounting All Odds: Education, Opportunity, and Society in the New Millennium*, the inaugural volume of the book series Research on African American Education. I am pleased that so many of you have chosen to challenge the intellectual contradictions that my father confronted all of his life, for race is still the problem of the 21st century. This volume is unique in that it has no historical or contextual blindspots as it confronts prevailing stereotypes and epistemologies that constrain thought, truth, and action. Such stereotypes have served to create an intellectual hegemony that have allowed educational and social science research relative to persons of color, to be viewed through a narrow lens, under the guise of scholarship. *Surmounting All Odds: Education, Opportunity, and Society in the New Millennium* attempts to confront this history of blatant cultural chauvinism, of blatant distortions and omissions that have resulted in knowledge production and utilization that have had negative consequences for African Americans in particular, and informative scholarship in general. That this book is dedicated to my father is testament to his life's work and to the fact that succeeding generations are utilizing his work to sustain and to uplift the lives of future generations.

In Struggle,

Mkhululi David Graham DuBois
Amherst, Massachusetts

NOTE

1. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the International Seminar, Review and Prospect for World History at the Turn of the Century, held

August 11–15, 1996, in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, People's Republic of China, by the Chinese Contemporary World History Research Society.

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INTRODUCTION

We live in troubled times. Comments by our esteemed national leaders regarding race show us the magnitude of maturation yet to take place in America. Race and schooling have become so intertwined as to become socially, politically, and economically interdependent. The economy is in a major slump and the poverty rate is climbing, with a growing division between the "haves" and "have-nots" in our society. Massive educational underachievement abounds. Unemployment is up, welfare rolls are increasing, and more and more of our youngsters are being incarcerated as opposed to educated. Corporate greed has reached new depths and caused a growing crisis of confidence. New laws are passed, purporting to leave no child behind, however, operationalized, the law in effect does the exact opposite by further stratifying society. We are in the midst of a wartime economy, with no realistic domestic agenda, social welfare agenda, as part of our national discussion. As a result, those already left behind in the distribution of America's bounty are disproportionately affected by national priorities of guns over butter. Amidst it all, the primacy of race and schooling in American life have never been more significant.

Schools find themselves in a deceptive paradox. Charged with the responsibility of educating those who will, in turn, educate future generations, schools play a pivotal role in the legitimation and reproduction of a society characterized by a marked degree of social and economic inequality. It is, at best, anachronistic to ignore the allocative functions of schooling in this regard.

Given our current national climate, this is a most propitious time to pull together a fine collection of research examining the myriad dimensions of

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African American education. The collective import of these chapters is their attempt to probe, analyze, reconceptualize, and challenge dominant interpretations of issues surrounding race, schooling, and class in America. The volume is divided into three parts.

Part I of this volume focuses on laying out the schooling of African Americans in historical and contemporary context. While remaining sensitive to the topic of race and schooling for African Americans, it depicts vividly the social, political, and economic consequences of underachievement in America. Christopher M. Span's "Knowledge is Light, Knowledge is Power" addresses the educational history of African Americans following the Civil War, depicting quite poignantly African Americans' long standing cultural appreciation for learning and education. In "Curriculum, Culture and Power," William Watkins situates Black education within a sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociointellectual context. He asserts the necessity to both historicize and politicize Black education. Frank Brown's "The Changing Faces of Education for African Americans after *Brown*: Equity, Excellence, Choice, Vouchers, and Privatization" addresses issues central to school choice in public education after the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown* making *de jure* racial segregation of public education unconstitutional. Rodney K. Hopson juxtaposes the "problem of the language line" as representative of a major area of concern for educational and language scholars who look to improve the life chances of African American youngsters in his chapter "Language, Race, and Schooling." Our next chapter by Hayes and Cunningham, titled "Family and School Environments Working Together to Impact Academic Achievement in African American Adolescents," examines through quantitative and qualitative analyses how perceptions of parental involvement and teacher support impacted academic outcomes in high-achieving African American adolescents. Richardson's "Battling before Birth: Institutionalized Barriers to the Health and Well-Being of African American Children" reviews America's public health policy commitment to children by calling attention to the relationship between hindrances to health initiatives, poverty, discrimination, and the educational prospects of African American children. "African American Violence Exposure: An Emerging Health Issue" by Killough, Webster, Brown, Houck, Edwards, and Logue argues that to change a violent environment, we must first understand the underlying dynamics of violence in the broader community and its relationship to healthcare. Christopher Dunbar, Jr., and Reitumetse Obakeng Mabokela, in "Dashed Hopes and Withered Dreams: Alternative School for Boys Who 'Don't Fit In,'" offer an understanding of how students placed in alternative schools make sense of their life experiences and how these experiences translate into their perception of schooling. Yeakey's chapter, titled "From Classrooms to Cellblocks: African American Juveniles in the Justice System," focuses upon the overrepresentation of African American males in the juvenile justice system. "Sports, Opportunities, and the American Dream: Athletic Investment and Mobility Aspirations of Ethnically Diverse High School Students," by Amber Rodriguez and Jomills Braddock, examines the relationship between participation in school sports and adolescent perceptions of the American opportunity structure. To put it another way, they consider whether sport participation influences the development of positive perceptions of future life chances among adolescents, thus increasing their perceived chances of attaining the "American dream." Finally, in this section, Beverly D. Epps and Harriet R. Morrison examine the myriad issues surrounding the new law Congress passed in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act, in their chapter "Leaving No Child Behind: Examining Issues of School Reform and Social Justice."

The chapters in Part II are largely focused on teaching, learning, and achievement that occur inside the institutional framework of schools themselves. In "Historical and Developmental Perspectives on Black Academic Achievement," Margaret Beale Spencer, William E.Cross, Jr., Vinay Harpalani, and Tyhesha Goss debunk the argument of cultural inferiority using the popularized "acting White" hypothesis of Black academic underachievement as an example. In "The Imputation of Black Inferiority: Does it Contribute to the Achievement Gap?", Barbara A. Sizemore attempts to integrate ideas emerging in the first decade of the 20th century to practices now occurring in education in the 21st century to ask three key questions. The questions generate the hypothesis that the imputation of Black inferiority contributes to the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites on standardized tests.

The goal of "The More Things Change...: Trends in Identification with Academics among Minority Students from 1972–1992" by Jason Osborne is to examine historical trends in the identification with academics among minority students. Using archival data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, identification in high school seniors from 1972, 1982, and 1992 was assessed and compared. Diane S. Pollard and Olga M. Welch in "One Size Does Not Fit All: An Examination of Issues in Enhancing the Academic Achievement of African American Pre-College Students" discuss two quite dissimilar educational interventions aimed at enhancing academic achievement in two different groups of African American pre-college students. In "Mining the Fields of Teacher Education: Preparing Teachers to Teach African American Children in Urban Schools," by Patricia A. Edwards, Gwendolyn T. McMillon, and Clifford T. Bennett, the authors present an example of an urban school where the problems and complexities became overwhelming, and resulted in teacher frustration and resistance to change. The case described in this chapter provides many insights, illustrating some of the practices and dispositions to watch for as researchers negotiate relationships in schools. Causey and Freeman, in "Mentoring Adolescents At Risk or At Promise," examine the important role of mentoring for African American students. Frank C. Worrell, in "Why Are There So Few African Americans in Gifted Education Programs?", attempts to answer this often asked question. "The Disproportionality of African Americans in Special Education: An Enduring Threat to Equality and Opportunity," coauthored by Audrey Davis McCray, Gwendolyn Webb-Johnson, and La Vonne I. Neal, examines the research and educational practices related to African American disproportionate representation in special education programs in the United States. The essence of Verdugo and Henderson's chapter, "The Dropout Rate Among African American Males: A Policy Perspective," is an examination of the high dropout rates of African American males as well as a search for effective dropout prevention/intervention strategies. RoSusan D.Bartee, M. Christopher Brown, and William T. Trent examine the issue of school choice in their chapter, "School A or School B?: The Nexus between Race and School Choice." Our last chapter in Part II, by Richard C. Hunter, Frank Brown, and Saran Donahoo, examines the various models of governance in big city school districts in their chapter "A New Model for Governance in Big City School Districts."

A discussion of key post-secondary issues impacting African American youth is the central focus of Part III. The objective of Gniesha Y. Dinwiddie and Walter R. Allen's chapter titled "Two Steps Forward, Three Steps Back: Campus Climate, Gender, and African American Representation in Higher Education" is to investigate patterns of low representation and graduation rates and to articulate experiences and perceptions of the campus milieu for Black male and female students in two specific campus contexts: the historically Black college and university and the predominantly White institution. Eboni M. Zamani examines the effects of individual characteristics, educational aspirations, self-interest, and racial affect measures on African American community college students' attitudes toward affirmative action in college admissions, in her chapter, "Affirmative Action Attitudes of African American Community College Students: The Impact of Educational Aspirations, Self-Interest, and Racial Affect." In "Challenging the Academic Divide: An Examination of Persistence Factors among Low-Income Students of Color," Eugene L. Anderson, Carol Camp Yeakey, Harriet R. Morrison, and Beverly D. Epps analyze the impact of academic preparation and post-enrollment activities on the persistence of underprivileged youth. Using the most recent data from the Beginning Post-Secondary Student Longitudinal Study (BPS), they examine the relationship between economic, social, and academic variables and student persistence among low income students of color in the United States. Jeanita W. Richardson, examines the contemporary dilemmas facing historically Black colleges and universities today. Her chapter is titled "Misrepresented and Misunderstood: Contemporary Dilemmas Facing HBCUs." Joy L. Gaston's "Navigating the Shape of the River: Helping Black Students Succeed in Colleges and Universities" examines factors related to the success of Black students in higher education. Utilizing a historical perspective, V.P. Franklin examines historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in "A Different World: The Social and Educational Objectives of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities before and after the *Brown* Decision." "When and Where We Enter: African American Students' Marginalization in the Context of a Predominantly White Multicultural Education Course," by Heather M. Pleasants, provides an opportunity for dialogue about multicultural education within a predominantly White college and university. Frierson speaks to the importance for culturally relevant programmatic evaluation in his chapter, "The Importance of Increasing the Numbers of Individuals of Color to Enhance Cultural Responsiveness in Program Evaluation." Eugene L. Anderson analyzes the effectiveness of controversial percentage plans in higher education in the states of California, Texas, and Florida, in his chapter "Percentage Plans in Admissions."

Finally, given the current challenges to affirmative action in schools and the larger society, this inaugural publication appropriately closes with "A Case for Race Consciousness" by T. Alexander Aleinikoff. In this chapter, Aleinikoff argues for race-based approaches to offset racial bias inherent in America's institutionalized policies and practices.

In a real sense, there is no conclusion to this volume, because the text relative to race and schooling and its implications for African Americans in our society is still being written. While the chapters in this volume have largely focussed on schools, the larger issues are: What kind of government shall we have? In what kind of society shall we live, and with what kind of involvement? For whom, and on whose behalf? Ways can be found to include all citizens in making the critical decisions about what will be produced, what will be consumed, how benefits will be distributed, and how America will relate to the rest of the world. Without a vision of the requirements of democracy and social justice, and without the political will to make that vision real, we render our nation, our country, at risk. Our schools simply parrot the larger challenges to cultural reform and social struggle in the quest for a truly democratic society. As Mkhululi David Graham Du Bois has reminded us, African Americans and committed democrats must be in the forefront of that struggle.

C.C.Y.
R.D.H.

PART I

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

"KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT, KNOWLEDGE IS POWER"

African American Education in Antebellum America

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> *A good education (is) the most valuable blessing that we (free Blacks), as a people, can bestow upon the rising generation.... Give them this and they cease to grovel; give them this and they emerge from their degradation, though crushed beneath a mountain weight of prejudice; give them this and they will command respect and consideration from all whose good opinions are worth having...*
>
> —William Watkins (1836)

INTRODUCTION

In the dawn of the 20th century, few chroniclers of the African American past demonstrated a greater appreciation of the group's history and experiences than William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. This was especially true with regard to the educational history of African Americans following the

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Surmounting All Odds, pages 3–29
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Civil War. At the time, Du Bois was one of a handful of theorists and social scientists to proffer that African Americans, in particular formerly enslaved African Americans, maintained a longstanding cultural appreciation for learning and education. African Americans, free[1] or freed according to Du Bois, were committed to acquiring an education because they collectively equated knowledge with power, autonomy, and social mobility. They recognized that literacy and schools had the potential to transform lives and society, that they were vehicles for social change and uplift, and that they created opportunities. The ex-slave's push for an education in the immediate aftermath of slavery was an impressive feat to Du Bois and was virtually all the evidence he needed to support his contentions. Formerly enslaved African Americans seized the moment; they built and attended schools and churches for personal and collective improvement, they became teachers and solicited northern-born teachers for their race's uplift, and their actions set in motion the rise of universal education in the South for all children. In an 1897 *Atlantic Monthly* article, which would be reprinted six years later as the first chapter in his monumental publication, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois would attempt to capture the enthusiasm in which formerly enslaved Blacks actively pursued an education. "Only those," Du Bois argued, "who have watched and guided the faltering feet, the misty minds, the dull understandings of the dark pupils of these schools know how faithfully, how piteously, this people strove to learn" (1897, p. 196). To Du Bois, no oppressed people in the history of mankind had made greater strides toward learning than the freedpeople of the American South in the first decade after emancipation.

The proactive demeanor and zeal of formerly enslaved African Americans as documented by W.E.B. Du Bois in his early writings did not spring forth from obscurity, however; such emphasis on learning and education had antebellum—pre-Civil War—roots. Prior to the Civil War, African Americans overcame insurmountable obstacles just to acquire the rudiments of an education. The values and expectations African Americans noticeably placed on education following the Civil War had a history and were part of an enduring struggle in the Black experience to acquire an education to challenge and possibly dismantle an American social order that subjugated and enslaved them because of skin color. Evidence illustrates that free Blacks, northern- and southern-born, attempted to obtain an education to challenge this societal expectation and positioning of African Americans, as did a small percentage of enslaved African Americans, despite the harsh repercussions or adverse societal ramifications that typically accompanied these pursuits. Du Bois himself recognized the veracity to which the nation attempted to keep its African American populace ignorant. Antiliteracy laws against African Americans were so repressive and efficiently maintained in the slave South that Du Bois speculated only about 5% of enslaved African Americans were able to acquire some degree of literacy prior to emancipation, and that most would be required to obtain their learning in secrecy. Still, Du Bois—with no fault of his own—offered very little evidence or theory as to how and why this group, or free Blacks prior to the Civil War, would seek to acquire an education, and what specific purposes they envisioned an education would play in addressing their precarious existence in the American social order. This chapter is an attempt to chronicle this history. It builds upon the evidentiary and theoretical considerations of Du Bois by offering an educational history that serves as a prelude to Du Bois's analyses and assessments on African American education following the Civil War. The chapter highlights how African Americans—enslaved and free—in the colonial and antebellum eras acquired an education or the rudiments of literacy in spite of the nation's opposition to their pursuits, and it highlights how pre–Civil War African Americans established their own educational opportunities and why.

IDEOLOGY, THE LAW, AND OPPOSITION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

The history of African American education embodies the concepts of struggle and strife. For approximately the first 250 years of the African American experience, from 1619 to 1865, every American colony and later state prohibited or stridently restricted teaching free and enslaved African Americans the rudiments of literacy—the skills of reading and writing. Accordingly, by the end of the Civil War the overwhelming majority of enslaved African Americans were illiterate and few formal educational opportunities existed for the nation's free and freed Black populace.

This assessment was especially accurate in the nation's southern colonies and later states. South Carolina and Georgia were two of the first colonies to legally forbid the teaching of African Americans. In 1740, South Carolina's colonial legislation passed the first compulsory illiteracy laws, thus making it a crime to teach enslaved African Americans (Raffel, 1998). Thirty years later, colonial Georgia followed South Carolina's precedent, ratifying a law forbidding the teaching of enslaved African Americans to read or write (Cornelius, 1991). By 1830, Georgia—as a state—imposed fines, public whippings, and/or imprisonment to anyone caught teaching enslaved or free African Americans these prohibited skills. In that same year, North Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana also enforced such punishments on persons willing to teach the rudiments of literacy to enslaved African Americans. Two years later, Alabama's *Digest of Laws* prohibited, under fine, the teaching of enslaved Blacks, but this measure was not codified until 1852. During these antebellum years, anti-Black literacy laws were exceptionally repressive in South Carolina, a southern state that possessed a high free Black populace and where enslaved African Americans outnumbered Whites three to one. In 1834, three years after Nat Turner's revolt in Southampton County, Virginia, South Carolina enacted legislation that sternly punished and imprisoned every person caught teaching Blacks, enslaved or free. Mississippi, Missouri, and Maryland never adopted such legal restrictions against Black education or statutorily penalized persons engaged in such endeavors. Rather, they barred public assemblages of African Americans for educational purposes and strongly discouraged its White citizenry from assisting Blacks in acquiring the rudiments of education (Cornelius, 1991).

North of slavery, African Americans' educational opportunities fared somewhat better. Still, in northern states, segregation, by law and/or cultural practice, overwhelmingly determined the educational opportunities of the region's free Blacks. Practically every northern state providing common schooling for its free citizenry established a segregated or dual school system for its White and "colored" residents. Prejudice and discrimination served as the guidepost for free Blacks' blatant educational exclusion or segregation. At the beginning of the 19th century, as noted by historian Leon Litwack, local school committees throughout the New England region frequently assigned Black children "to séparate institutions, regardless of the district in which they resided" (1962, p. 114). Colonial and antebellum Connecticut, for example, "forbade, without the approval of civil authorities, the establishment of any educational institutions for the instruction" of nonresident African Americans (Litwack, 1962, p. 70). Arguably, an additional purpose of this statute was to control the possible influx of runaway slaves or migrating African Americans to Connecticut. Similarly, colonial and antebellum New York authorized its school districts to provide for the segregation of Black and White children (Litwack, 1962). In 1789, African Americans in New York City responded to the state's limited and discriminatory educational initiatives toward them by establishing a small number of private schools known as African Free Schools. Not until 1824 did the state's common council openly support these private Black schools, which were established to address the educational concerns and interests of the city's African American residents (Rury, 1983).

There were exceptions to these deliberate exclusions and inconveniences regarding Black education in the New England region, however. In 1789, the Massachusetts Education Act provided for the schooling of its educable children irrespective of gender or race. Hence, following the American Revolution, Massachusetts was the first American province to legislatively support the public education of Black children. Notwithstanding, by 1798, African Americans in Boston—because of persistent acts of discrimination and schooling inequities—petitioned the city legislature for a separate school.

Blacks in Boston firmly believed they were receiving, in comparison to their White counterpart, "no benefit from the free schools" provided by the city (Schultz, 1973). When their petition was denied, Boston's African American community promptly responded and commenced a private school under the tutelage of Elisha Sylvester, a White man, in the home of Primus Hall, a prominent free Black and abolitionist (Woodson, 1998). Two years later, 66 of Boston's leading Black residents would resubmit—to no avail—their request for separate school facilities, and again in 1806; thereafter Boston's school committee agreed to establish a permanent Black school and until 1855 adhered to a de facto segregated school system.[2]

Public schooling for all children, as in Massachusetts, was provided in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Yet, even these pro-abolitionist states adhered to the unwritten rule of requiring district school directors to establish—whenever possible—separate educational facilities for Black children (Litwack, 1962). "Michigan and Wisconsin," according to John Hope Franklin (2000), "adopted more democratic policies" (pp. 178–179), but even free Blacks here had to wait until after the Civil War to benefit from the state's educational initiatives. Other midwestern states were not as liberal. As late as 1860, Indiana, Illinois, and even the newly admitted state of Kansas passed similar legislation barring and/or circumscribing free Blacks' formal educational opportunities. Indiana legislation determined that "Negroes and mulattoes [sic] were not liable to school taxes, nor entitled to the benefit of school funds" (Hooker, 1876, p. 14). An Illinois statute established that "persons of color were to have no other interest in the common school taxes except such amount as they paid themselves" (Hooker, 1876, p. 14). Similarly, Kansas's law, until 1872, altogether excluded Blacks from any of the state's public school initiatives (Hooker, 1876). Accordingly, well before the Civil War, in fact by the 1830s, as Litwack estimated, "statute or custom" purposefully placed African American children in "separate schools in nearly every northern community" or excluded them altogether (1962, p. 115).

Notwithstanding, a relatively small, but significant, number of antebellum Whites—North and South, slave owning or not—staunchly opposed these legal and ideological restrictions shaping the educational opportunities of African Americans, moreso with regard to slave literacy than public school segregation. Their reasons were primarily religious, believing that even those who were enslaved had the right to read and personally comprehend the Bible for their own salvation. However, their rhetoric, complaints, and in some cases petitions had little impact on the nation's entrenched ideological consensus supportive of Black inferiority theories, slavery, and the segregation and subjugation of African Americans. These dominant views complemented the growing number of laws banning or constricting Black literacy. They "proved" that African Americans—

enslaved or free—were inherently incapable of learning, that attempting to teach African Americans would incite slave insurrections or escape attempts, and that schools for African Americans or a literate slave populace piercingly conflicted with the relative success of a national political economy overwhelming dependent upon slave labor.

In *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781/1999), Thomas Jefferson racialized views on Black intelligence and education embodied the nation's perspective on slavery, Black inferiority, and the futility of educating enslaved or free African Americans. Jefferson was utterly convinced that people of African descent, because of biological or racial traits, were mentally inferior in reason and imagination to Whites. "I think one could scarcely be found," decreed Jefferson, "capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they [referring to enslaved African Americans] are dull, tasteless, and anomalous" (1781/1999, pp. 146–147). Jefferson concluded enslavement aided rather than impeded Blacks' overall development, and that social reforms or educational initiatives directly aimed at the overall improvement of African Americans would do little to change their status in a country that despised their very existence even as slave property.

In 1831, Elias B. Caldwell, acting secretary of the American Colonization Society, articulated a very similar argument.[3] To Caldwell, enslaved and free Blacks should be kept "in the lowest state of degradation and ignorance" to avoid their unfruitful aspirations of wanting "privileges which they can never attain" in American society (Litwack, 1962, p. 23). Three years earlier, Connecticut's Colonization Society seemed to have served as the forerunner to Caldwell's contention. The Connecticut-based society was convinced that schooling and education would be a waste of time and disservice to African Americans.

> Educate him [the African or African American] and you have added little or nothing to his happiness—you have unfitted him for the society and sympathies of his degraded kindred, and yet you have not procured for him, and cannot procure for him, any admission into the society and sympathy of white men. (Colonization Society of Connecticut, 1828, p. 5)

Mutually, the American Colonization Society and its Connecticut subsidiary sincerely believed they were offering antebellum African Americans a just and humane solution by restricting their existing educational opportunities and advocating their near immediate relocation to continental Africa. It was perceived that such measures would alleviate the problems free and enslaved African Americans endured in a nation hostile to their existence.

By contrast, both enslaved and free African Americans during the antebellum era responded to these varying forms of discrimination and recalled with great veracity how such ideology and legal restrictions excluded them from learning education's rudiments. From their testimony, it appeared that legislative acts of exclusion or restriction were less of a problem than local sentiment and opposition. In the slave community, for instance, Maryland-born and enslaved African American Charles Ball was certain that "the cotton planters have always been most careful to prevent the slaves from learning to read" (1837, p. 164). "They fear," he continued, "that they [slaves] may be imbibed with the notions of equality and liberty" from such teachings (p. 164). The notable Frederick Douglass was more forceful with his words and condemnation of the slave South. In his autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass deduced:

> It is perfectly well understood at the south, that to educate a slave is to make him discontented with slavery, and to invest him with a power which shall open to him the treasures of freedom; and since the object of the slaveholder is to maintain complete authority over his slave, his constant vigilance is exercised to prevent everything which militates against, or endangers, the stability of his authority. Education being among the menacing influences, and, perhaps, the most dangerous, is, therefore, the most cautiously guarded against. (Douglass, 1855, p. 432)

Wilson Armistead drew a comparable conclusion to Douglass arguing further that the foremost culprit to the exclusion of African Americans—enslaved or free—from the learning process was slavery and its intended outcome. "The tendency of Slavery," darned Armistead, "is to keep down, at nearly the level of brutes, beings who might be brightened into intellectual and moral beauty" by education (1848, p. 38).

Francis Fedric, a runaway slave from Kentucky, took a slightly different approach and staunchly challenged the prevailing views about African Americans' inherent incapacity to learn and their designated place as subjugated people in America. His position perhaps best summarized the opinions of most antebellum African Americans cognizant of how denigrating and misinformed beliefs, the law, and the institution of slavery adversely affected African Americans' chances for an education.

> It cannot be pretended for one moment, truthfully, that we are not capable of understanding if we were taught. I myself am a living witness against such an absurdity; after fifty years of age I have learnt to read and write. No, no. It is not our stupidity, but the slaveowners' lust of power and gain which makes them directly oppose the precepts of our Lord.... It is only by keeping the poor slaves in brutish ignorance that they can uphold slavery. Let the slaves

> have the same opportunity as the freemen to learn to read and write, and nothing could prevent their rising, and freeing themselves. (1863, pp. 53–54)

Ideology and law aside, some enslaved African Americans knew personally the horrors imposed upon a slave able to secretly acquire a rudimentary education. Ex-slave and postbellum African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Bishop William Heard witnessed firsthand from his childhood the harsh reality that awaited any slave caught reading and/or writing. "It was against the law for any person to teach any slave to read," stated Heard, "and any slave caught writing suffered the penalty of having his forefinger cut from his right hand" (1924, p. 31). Disfigurement was to ensure that a literate slave never wrote again, because a slave able to write could literally write his or her own pass to freedom. Still, despite the severity of the punishment, as Heard concluded, there were some among him "who could read and write" (p. 31). Enslaved on a cotton plantation in Macon, Georgia, Lucindy Jurdon was keenly aware of Heard's stark recollection. When asked many years later if she ever learned how to read and/or write Jurdon reiterated a story to her interviewer similar to Heard's remembrance. "Ef us tried to learn to read or write, dey would cut your forefingers off," Jurdon recalled (Rawick, 1972, Alabama, p. 14). Even at the age of 100, Ferebe Rogers didn't forget the severe punishment reserved for educationally ambitious African Americans or literate slaves, despite the imprecise particulars of her recollection. When prodded to answer if she, or anyone she knew while enslaved, learned to read or write, Rogers ardently responded, "I'd had my right arm cut off at de elbow if I'd a-done dat. If dey foun' an nigger what could read and write, dey'd cut yo' arn off at de elbow, or sometimes at de shoulder" (Rawick, 1972, Georgia, p. 215).

In 1936, Alabama native Louis Meadows was interviewed about his experiences as a slave. When asked if he had learned how to read and/or write during slavery Meadows quickly shrugged off his interviewer's question. "Mistus," he bluntly stated, "us was whooped if us even looked into a book. Us couldn't read a line, you know, but if us even looked in at de pictures, it was jest too bad" (Rawick, 1972, Alabama, p. 255). Ex-slave and Tuscumbia, Alabama, native Mary Ella Grandberry offered a recollection similar to Meadows. "De white folks," she commented, "didn't 'low us to even look at a book. Dey would stol' an' sometimes whup us iffen dey caught us wid our head in a book" (Rawick, 1972, Alabama, p. 160). Without ever meeting them, Virginia native William J. Anderson well understood the memories proffered by Meadows and Grandberry and was convinced that "slaveholders laws" were "positively opposed to the slave learning anything more than to handle the axe, plough and hoe" (Anderson, 1857, p. 6). "I had no schooling," Anderson insisted, "except what I stole by fire and moon light, with a little Sabbath light. And oftentimes…I was whipped for trying to read my Bible" (Anderson, 1857, p. 6). Still, the aforementioned repercussions or opposition, while ever-present, seemed secondary to Enoch Golden of Baldwin County, Georgia, in his pursuit of learning how to read and write. Golden escaped penalty and kept secret his acquired learning—and soon thereafter covert teachings—in the slave quarters. However, his initiatives caused great harm to many of his fellow bondsmen. On his deathbed, Golden declared with both pride and regret that "he been de death o' many a nigger 'cause he taught so many to read and write" (Rawick, 1972, Georgia, p. 212).

Free Blacks—North and South—desiring a formal education in their communities also recognized the legal and ideological ramifications that awaited them. As a group, their existence and varying successes proved to be an anomaly in a nation premised upon a White supremacist ideology and the hereditary and lifelong enslavement of people of African descent. In some locales, especially in the South, they barely maintained a quasi-free status and, consequently, fared little better than their enslaved brethren. Such fate was all too familiar to the Reverend William Troy, who left his birth state for Canada when he and his family could no longer endure life in the United States. Born free in Essex County, Virginia, Troy recalled the immense difficulty he had in procuring an education for himself and his family. "Personally, I have suffered on account of my color in regard to education. I was not allowed to go to school publicly, had to learn privately.... Further, I could not educate my children there, and make them feel as women and men ought—for, under those oppressive laws, they would feel a degradation not intended by Him who made of one blood all the people of the earth" (Drew, 1856, p. 355). Freeborn Black Thomas Hedgebeth endured a similar existence in Halifax County, North Carolina. "The law," he reasoned, "there does not favor colored people.... A free-born man in North Carolina is as much oppressed, in one sense, as the slave. I was not allowed to go to school...and I think it an outrageous sin and shame, that a free colored man could not be taught" (Drew, 1856, p. 276).

Some free Blacks, especially those in the North, were very especially outspoken about their blatant exclusion from the growing array of opportunities throughout the nation and the hypocrisy of living in a segregated, slave-sanctioning democracy. For example, David Walker, born in 1789 a free Black in North Carolina, was extremely forthright on the continuous subjugation and enslavement of African Americans. In the early 1820s, Walker moved to Boston and soon thereafter became a contributor for the nation's first Black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, and the author of *Walker's Appeal*, published in 1829. Prior to his death in 1830, Walker's publications directly challenged the nation's position on slavery, the historic exclusion of African Americans from a quality education, and the various colonization movements aimed to transport free Blacks to Africa. Educationally, Walker maintained, Whites intentionally kept African Americans—enslaved or free—from receiving any significant amount of learning. In the South he cited the countless laws and restrictions that prohibited the teaching of slaves and free Blacks. In the North he detailed the inadequate and inferior education African American children received in comparison to White children (Walker, 1969).

Walker was not alone in expressing such politically charged convictions. Expatriate and London resident Wilson Armistead, in his immense volume, *A Tribute to the Negro* (1848), also blasted the United States for its incessant regard of African American education as a "crime" and its perpetual inhumane treatment of "Africa's progeny" (pp. 94–95).

> The great doctrine, that God hath "created all men equal, and endowed them with certain inalienable rights," and that amongst these are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," is affirmed in the American Declaration of Independence, and justified in the theory of its constitutional laws. But there is a stain upon its glory; Slavery, in its most abject and revolting form, pollutes its soil; the wailings of Slaves mingle with its songs of liberty; and the clank of their chain is heard, in horrid discord, with the chorus of their triumphs. The records of the States are not less distinguished by their wise provisions for securing the order and maintaining the institutions of the country, than by their ingenious devices for riveting the chain, and perpetuating the degradation of, their Coloured brethren;—*their education is branded as a crime,*—their freedom is dreaded as a blasting pestilence;—the bare suggestion of their emancipation is proscribed as a treason to the cause of American independence. (pp. 94–95, emphasis added)

Armistead, like Walker, voiced his demand for slavery's immediate abolition and greater opportunities for the nation's African American populace. Together they articulated the opinions of countless antebellum free Blacks that invariably saw their prospective opportunities, self-interests, education, and even existence uncontrollably linked to the future of American slavery.

EDUCATION AND ITS VALUE AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

In both the free Black and slave communities education was valued for a myriad of reasons. Among free Blacks, in particular, education was perceived as a primary vehicle to combat racism and second-class citizenship (Williams, 1985). According to Dorothy Porter (1995), northern and southern free Black leaders recognized the necessity and expediency of education given the group's limited and insecure existence in the American social order. Throughout the nation, various welfare, temperance, Bible, moral reform, and educational societies—established by and for free Blacks—catered to the group's educational expectations at a time when the nation was withdrawing or restricting its efforts regarding Black education. For more than employment purposes, education was to render free Blacks "useful to society and acceptable to God," eradicate the notions of them as "indolent and shiftless" people, and was expected to "replace idleness and intemperance" with "good taste and manners" (Porter, 1995, pp. 79–80). In 1834, the Reverend Joseph M. Corr of Philadelphia affirmed this sentiment in his Fourth of July oration before the city's Humane Mechanic's Society. Corr regarded education as the "means whereby the shackles of ignorance may be unrivetted, and man be qualified for usefulness in all the pursuits of life; for knowledge is light—knowledge is power" (1834, p. 3).

Free Blacks expected their antebellum educational opportunities to serve as the foundation for the race's societal advancement. Schools were intended to be institutions that informed African American youth of their precarious societal statuses; they were to assist freeborn African American children in learning the literacy skills necessary for combating discrimination, segregation, and slavery in adulthood; and they were expected to aid African Americans in acquiring equality, or at least some degree of social mobility. Education was perceived as the primary tool for free Blacks to prove their humanity, merit, and capabilities in an American society that regarded them as slaves or inferior people. To free Black Baltimore native William Watkins, such emphasis on education was deemed absolutely necessary and could only be achieved through the collective resources and support of free Blacks throughout the country. Only a people with a good education, Watkins deduced, could effectively counter the many challenges antebellum African American children were to face when they came of age in a slave-sanctioning and race-based society. "A good education," Watkins argued, "was the most valuable blessing that we [free Blacks], as a people, can bestow upon the rising generation" (1836, p. 2). "Give them this," Watkins reasoned, "and they cease to grovel; give them this and they emerge from their degradation, though crushed beneath a mountain weight of prejudice; give them this and they will command respect and consideration from all whose good opinions are worth having" (p. 11).

Similar sentiment toward education and its transformative potential was expressed in the antebellum slave community. Despite the legal restrictions and harsh punishments for seeking a rudimentary education, countless enslaved African Americans seemed willing to risk "life or limb" in order to acquire some degree of literacy. By the close of the American Revolution, for example, it appeared that enslaved African Americans already had intact, culturally, a distinct respect and perceived value system or usefulness for literacy. The majority—if the ex-slave narratives of the mid- to late 19th century and the testimony of formerly enslaved African Americans interviewed by the Works Progress Administration between 1936 and 1938 are accepted—sought to become literate during slavery in order to read the Bible for personal salvation and for personal liberation, the latter implying that they sought to free themselves or a loved one from enslavement.[4]

In comparison to free Blacks' antebellum educational experiences, historians have offered much more speculation on the quest for and value of literacy in the antebellum slave community. For example, Carter G. Woodson (1921), Henry Bullock (1967), Thomas Webber (1978), and Janet Duitsman Cornelius (1991) each respectively agree that the acquired skills of reading and/or writing were viewed as a very practical means of empowerment, autonomy, and freedom. Without question, literacy equated freedom to enslaved African American Thomas Johnson and his family. As soon as he was old enough, he explained, his mother taught him "the difference between the condition of the coloured and White people" (1909, p. 3) "She told me," Johnson continued, "that if I would learn how to read and write, some day I might be able to get my freedom" (p. 3).

Historian Janet Duitsman Cornelius and others who have done work on slave literacy argue that learning to read and write reinforced an image of self-worth and community empowerment among enslaved African Americans. To Cornelius, slave literacy was "a communal act" and "a political demonstration of resistance to oppression and of self-determination for the Black community...through literacy the slave could obtain skills valuable in the White world...and could use those skills for special privileges or to gain freedom" (1991, p. 3). Susan Boggs's, like Thomas Johnson's mother, conscious sacrifice to forego her own ambitions of acquiring some degree of literacy for her child's benefit is an excellent illustration of enslaved Blacks' perception of literacy as a form of personal and communal resistance. Boggs sacrificed her own opportunities to obtain some degree of literacy so that her son could learn to read and write in a secret school held on a nearby farm. Her hope was that he would be able to use his acquired learning to escape enslavement and help others, including herself, to do the same (Blassingame, 1977, pp. 420–421).

Thomas Webber's publication, *Deep Like Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831–1865*, offers an equally interesting perspective on enslaved African Americans' proactive demeanor toward learning. Webber reasoned:

> To understand the nature of education in the slave quarter community is to come to grips with the paradox of the "free slave". Though the chains with which Whites controlled black bodies were very real, try as they might, Whites could not control black minds. These were molded from birth in an educational process created and managed by the quarter community.... While still legally slaves, the black men, women, and children of the quarter

> community successfully protected their psychological freedom and celebrated their human dignity. (1978, pp. 261–262)

Historian James Olney likened Webber's thesis, deducing further that enslaved African Americans saw literacy as a "mechanism for forming an identity," and the freedom of becoming a person, even a citizen, in American society (1985, p. 153). Similarly, literacy in the antebellum slave community, according to historian V.P. Franklin, signified an additional skill to protect and assist enslaved African Americans in surviving the immeasurable vices of American slavery. "Education and literacy," stated Franklin, "were greatly valued among Afro-Americans enslaved in the United States because they saw in their day-to-day experiences—from one generation to the next—that knowledge and information helped one to survive in a hostile environment" (1994, p. 164). Accordingly, enslaved African Americans equated education as an additional arsenal for enduring slave life and possibly escaping enslavement and earning freedom for themselves, family members, and/or friends.

Ivan McDougle's early 20th century publication on runaway slaves strongly supports the contention that enslaved African Americans attempted to use their secretly gained literacy skills to earn their freedom. McDougle illustrated that 20.2%, or 71 of the 350 advertised runaways in antebellum Kentucky, were listed as being able to read. Thirty-seven, or 10.5%, of the total number of runaways in antebellum Kentucky was also reported as being able to write (McDougle, 1918). Similarly, almost 9% of the 625 runaway slaves interviewed in William Still's *The Underground Railroad* (approximately 56 escapees) were recorded as learning how to read and/or write while enslaved (Still, 1872). While these figures may be perceived as low or inconsequential in the greater analysis, they serve as excellent examples of literate and semiliterate African Americans in the antebellum slave community. Moreover, they illustrate that enslaved African Americans desired, and sometimes used, these skills to challenge their status and increase their chances of obtaining freedom. Such ambitions, whether gained or not, were passed down for generations until freedom universally came to enslaved African Americans with the end of the Civil War.

Unsurprisingly, one of the primary initiatives of former slaves following the Civil War, as Du Bois spent much of his career researching, was the establishment of schools for their own personal and professional improvement (Anderson, 1988; Butchart, 1980; Du Bois, 1897, 1935, 1998; Jones, 1980; Morris, 1982; Span, 2001, 2002). Former slave John Quincy Adams of Richmond, Virginia, characterized this assessment. As a slave child unable to acquire any formal instruction he considered "going to school to get knowledge...one of the greatest privileges" that a person could enjoy (1872, p. 14). "That was the reason," he presumed, "the South fought against the colored people learning to read and write" (p. 14) and continue to challenge their educational pursuits as freedpeople in slavery's aftermath.

OVERCOMING INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THEIR EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

The proactive demeanor and actions of free and enslaved antebellum African Americans toward learning demonstrated their profound respect toward the skills of reading and/or writing irrespective of the legal restraints or severe repercussions. As evident from the previous discussion, throughout the antebellum era a small minority of enslaved African Americans ingeniously acquired some degree of literacy and free Blacks built schools for themselves despite the opposition. Still, much debate exists as to the extent African Americans—enslaved or free—obtained a rudimentary education in the antebellum era, especially with regard to slave literacy. For nearly a century, historians have debated the approximate percentage of literate slaves in this era. For example, in 1916, the "father of Black history," Carter G. Woodson, figured that at least 10% of enslaved African Americans "had the rudiments of education in 1860" (p. 139). "But the proportion," he concluded "was much less than it was near the close of the era of better beginnings about 1825" (Woodson, 1998, p. 139). Woodson estimated that slave literacy rates declined by almost half after the 1820s given the series of strict legal measures aimed at deterring the teaching of enslaved African Americans. Nineteen years later, W.E.B. Du Bois (1935), primarily assessing the educational and governmental activities of literate and semiliterate ex-slaves in the immediate postbellum (post–Civil War) era, estimated that approximately 5% of enslaved African Americans in the South were literate on the eve of the Civil War.

Approximately 65 years later, contemporary historian Janet Duitsman Cornelius offered her own assessment and it supported Woodson's higher estimate. She reviewed the testimony of ex-slaves interviewed between 1936 and 1938 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and more than 200 autobiographical narratives of formerly enslaved African Americans. Cornelius (1991) concluded that more enslaved African Americans learned to read and/or write after 1825 than Woodson or Du Bois could have known when they proffered their assessments. At least 5% of the ex-slaves interviewed by the WPA explicitly stated that they learned to read and/or write during enslavement (Cornelius, 1991). Given the fact that these interviews were conducted approximately 65 years after slavery's abolition, virtually every ex-slave acknowledging their acquisition of some degree of literacy during enslavement had to have attained these skills post-1825. Notwithstanding, Cornelius forewarns, "there can never be exact measurements of the extent of literacy among enslaved African Americans just as these are impossible in other cultures of the past" (p. 8).

While Cornelius's final remarks prove to be very accurate, how enslaved African Americans acquired the skills of reading and writing, with minimal guidance and under the constraints of American slavery, truly characterized the group's historic fortitude and determination to learn despite the seemingly insurmountable odds against them. With few options for instruction, minimal resources, and under the most constraining circumstances, numerous enslaved African Americans, haphazardly and defiantly acquired the rudiments of an elementary education. Still, as Woodson pointed out, no matter how "discouraging these conditions seemed, the situation was not entirely hopeless" (1998, p. 125). Woodson continued:

> The ways in which slaves thereafter acquired knowledge are significant. Many picked it up here and there, some followed occupations which were in themselves enlightening, and others learned from slaves whose attainments were unknown to their masters. Often influential White men taught Negroes not only the rudiments of education but almost anything they wanted to learn. Not a few slaves were instructed by the White children whom they accompanied to school. While attending ministers and officials whose work often lay open to their servants, many of the race learned by contact and observation. Shrewd Negroes sometimes slipped stealthily into back streets, where they studied under a private teacher, or attended a school hidden from the zealous execution of the law. (pp. 125–126)

How Frederick Douglass learned to read and write was an excellent example of Woodson's remarks. At about the age of 10, Douglass's curiosity of his mistress' ability to read the Bible gave him the incentive to ask her to teach him how to read. She obliged, and "in an incredibly short time, by her kind assistance" Douglass "had mastered the alphabet and could spell words of three or four letters" (1881, p. 70). Upon her husband's discovery of Douglass's newly gained ability, he was outraged and forbade his wife from teaching young Douglass another lesson. Before Douglass he scolded his wife stating, "if you give a nigger an inch he will take an ell. Learning will spoil the best nigger in the world. If he learns to read the Bible it will forever unfit him to be a slave. He should know nothing but the will of his master, and learn to obey it" (p. 70). The outburst of his master had a profound affect on Douglass's future considerations regarding slavery, literacy, and freedom, especially since Douglass aspired to learn to read out of curiosity, not resistance. In retrospect, a much elder Douglass would sarcastically thank his former owner for allowing him to witness his anger over a slave learning how to read. Douglass surmised:

> His iron sentences, cold and harsh, sunk like heavy weights deep into my heart, and stirred up within me a rebellion not soon to be allayed…he underrated my comprehension, and had little idea of the use to which I was capable of putting the impressive lesson he was giving to his wife. He wanted me to be a slave; I had already voted against that on the home plantation of Col. Lloyd. That which he most loved I most hated; and the very determination which he expressed to keep me in ignorance only rendered me the more resolute to seek intelligence. In learning to read, therefore, I am not sure that I do not owe quite as much to the opposition of my master as to the kindly assistance of my amiable mistress (pp. 70–71)

Thenceforth, attempting to learn how to read and later write became an obsession for the young Frederick Douglass. Filled with the determination to become literate at any cost, and unable to rely anymore on his mistress as a potential resource, Douglass sought out differing avenues to develop his new ability. One opportunity that repeatedly seemed available involved the support of his White plantation playmates. "I used to carry almost constantly a copy of Webster's spelling-book in my pocket," Douglass recalled, "and when sent of errands, or when play-time was allowed me, I would step aside with my young friends and take a lesson in spelling" (1881, p. 74). Douglass would learn to write in much the same manner. While at work on the docks, Douglass secretly sketched the various words he identified on the barrels he loaded, and in the evenings or on Sundays he would coax his unsuspecting White playmates into competitive games involving the alphabet and writing. "With play-mates for my teachers, fences and pavements for my copy-books, and chalk for my pen and ink," Douglass proudly recollected, "I learned to write" (p. 86).

Douglass's informal educational attainment typified the earliest learning opportunities for the majority of enslaved African Americans who obtained some degree of literacy. Despite the law, most accounts indicate that enslaved African Americans learned to read before the age of 12, usually with some assistance from Whites, and well before they learned, if at all, to write. Learning to read before writing should not come as a surprise since writing required the mastery and acquisition of special equipment. As Cornelius deduced, "writing was harder to learn than reading, and presented the challenge of finding or making materials in a mostly rural society which had little use for these tools" (1991, p. 61). Nonetheless, enslaved African Americans made the most of their chances to learn, read, or write when such opportunities arose, whether at work or at home, publicly or secretly. A great example was Blanche K. Bruce, a future congressional senator that would hail from Mississippi. While enslaved, Bruce educated himself when he was at work at a printer's trade shop in Brunswick, Missouri (Woodson, 1998). Another was Benjamin Holmes. As an apprentice tailor in Charleston, South Carolina, Holmes "studied all the signs and names on the doors" of his employment (Cornelius, 1991). Thereafter, he would ask people to tell him—one or two at a time—the words he observed on the signs and/or doors. Remarkably, by the age of 12, he discovered that he could read newspapers.

Another common characteristic associated with slave literacy was the exchanging of goods for instructional lessons. Many slave children, for example, bartered trinkets, fruits, and other goods to their White peers to secure a rudimentary education. Young Richard Parker, for example, exchanged marbles to any youth willing to teach him the alphabet (Blassingame, 1977). James W. Sumler of Norfolk, Virginia, obtained an elementary education this way as well (Woodson, 1998). Tabb Gross learned to read by promising his 8-year-old master an orange every time he taught him the alphabet (Blassingame, 1977). Uncle Cepahs, "a slave of Parson Winslow of Tennessee," recalled how White children secretly taught him to read in exchange for food cooked for them by Dinah, Winslow's cook (Albert, 1890). John Quincy Adams's brother Robert acquired his first reading lessons in similar fashion. As a child "he would get all the nice fruit he could," stated Adams, "and bartered it off in the evening and on Sundays to any White child willing to teach him from a book he secretly possessed" (1872, pp. 9–10). Adams recalled, "that is the way many poor slaves learned to read and write" (p. 10).

Virginia-born Louis Hughes was somewhat of an exception to these aforementioned characteristics. Like Douglass, Hughes also recalled, "learning off the wall"; however, he was not a child but a young adult when he obtained his first reading lessons. Moreover, a fellow adult slave, Tom, who was the coachman for the plantation, taught him his first lessons. Tom secretly acquired his learning from some neighboring plasterers and workmen. According to Hughes, "they saw that he was so anxious to learn that they promised to teach him every evening if he would slip out to their house" (1896, p. 100). Hughes was also anxious to learn, but being a house servant could not get away as easily. Tom recognized Hughes's inconvenience and ambitions. He secretly taught Hughes by writing numerals and the alphabet on the side of a barn for him to copy. These lessons lasted for months before the plantation overseers finally discovered and put an end to them. By this time Hughes had already learned the basics of reading and writing.

The ingenious methods used by educationally ambitious enslaved African Americans to acquire some degree of literacy are recognizable in other ways as well. In his autobiography Lucius Holsey recalled selling old rags for books, so many that he was able to buy five books: two Webster's blue-back spellers, a school dictionary, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and the Bible. These books "constituted his "full stock of literary possessions;" a library, boasted Holsey, "more precious than gold" to him (1898, p. 17). Like many of the others, Holsey acknowledged that some White children and an African American man taught him the alphabet, after which he relayed:

> I fought my way unaided through the depths of my ponderous library. Day by day I took a leaf from one of the spelling books, and so folded it that one or two of the lessons were on the outside as if printed on a card. This I put in the pocket of my vest or coat, and when I was sitting on the carriage, walking the yard or streets, or using hoe or spade, or in the dining room, I would take out my spelling leaf, catch a word and commit it to memory. When one side of the spelling leaf was finished by this process, I would refold it again with a new lesson on the outside. When night came, I went to my little room, and with chips of fat pine, and pine roots…I would kindle a little blaze in the fireplace and turn my head toward it while lying flat on my back so as to get the most of the light on the leaves of the book…I reviewed the lessons of the day from the unmaimed [sic] book. By these means I learned to read and write a little in six months. Besides, I would catch words from the White people and retain them in memory until I could get to my dictionary. Then I would spell and define the words, until they became perfectly impressed upon my memory (pp. 17–18)

Holsey was fortunate that it only took him six months to master the art of reading. For most semiliterate or literate enslaved African Americans, given their restricted circumstances, such attainment was a laborious, extremely dangerous, and time-consuming process. For even the most determined slave, it oftentimes took years of clandestine self-instruction in order to comprehend the English written language well enough to claim the right of knowing how to read. The determination and raw intellectual capabilities of Holsey and other enslaved African Americans to acquire the rudiments of an elementary education with so little time and guidance and under the stresses and penalties of slave life demonstrated the incontestable impressiveness of their individual accomplishments. As one historian deduced, "with fragmented time, few teacher guides, and limited vocabulary…[it is] no wonder it could take even a determined slave years to read. Add the physical threats to other obstacles and the process becomes heroic" (Cornelius, 1991, p. 68).

Some enslaved African Americans, however, did not have to go through the trouble of self-educating themselves in secrecy or in fear of severe punishment. According to John Hope Franklin, schools for enslaved Blacks are known to have existed, despite the law or public sentiment, in Savannah, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Fayetteville, New Bern, and Raleigh, North Carolina; Lexington and Louisville, Kentucky; Fredericksburg and Norfolk, Virginia; "and various other cities in Florida, Tennessee, and Louisiana" (Franklin, 2000, p. 155). For example, "Patrick Snead of Savannah, Georgia was sent to a private institution until he could spell quite well and then to a Sunday-school for colored children" (Woodson, 1998, p. 132).

Similar regard for African Americans obtaining a rudimentary education can be found on the private dwellings of some slave owners. Reasons varied. W. S. Scarborough, the future president of Wilberforce College, remembered in his slave childhood receiving permission to attend a school in Bibb County, Georgia (Simmons, 1968). I. T. Montgomery, the future mayor of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, the first Black settlement established in the state, was instructed by his owner, Joseph Davis, in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Davis, and his brother, Jefferson Davis, attempted to train their slaves to be the accountants of the plantation (Woodson, 1998). Aaron Robinson recalled how his owner *required* his own children to teach Robinson how to read so that he could avoid taking them rabbit hunting (Blassingame, 1977). Mississippi native Smart Walker learned to read by his master's son, who had asked his father if he could teach Walker his school lessons (Blassingame, 1977). Frederick Law Olmsted witnessed a similar disregard for the sentiment forbidding Black literacy in Mississippi. While touring the state in 1852, Olmsted found a group of enslaved African Americans, all of whom could read, owned by a person entirely illiterate. The slave owner, according to Olmsted, took great pride in possessing such "loyal, capable, and intelligent Negroes" (Woodson, 1998, p. 128).

With the permission from his slave owner, Thomas Johnson's mother hired and paid a free Black man 50 cents to teach her son to read and write. These lessons only lasted one month, because Johnson's owner soon became disapproving of them; nonetheless this scenario illustrated the ambiguity regarding the slaveholding response to some slaves acquiring a rudimentary education (Johnson, 1909). Johnson's learning, however, did not stop. In secrecy he appropriated a Bible and "poured over it in his spare time, beginning with Genesis and calling out the letters of each word he could not understand" (Cornelius, 1991, p. 59). In tandem, he convinced the son of his master to read aloud a chapter from the New Testament every evening. Afterwards, Johnson would attempt to find these words in his Bible. "I got to understand a little about the Bible, and at the same time I was learning to spell" (p. 59). Before permanently escaping slavery, Johnson would also teach himself how to write both in print and cursive.

Like their enslaved counterpart, southern-born free Blacks desiring a formal education experienced similar difficulties. Their anomaly status in the slave South severely circumscribed their opportunities of acquiring a formal education. As previously noted, virtually every southern state challenged southern-born free Blacks' privilege to acquire an education by passing laws making it illegal to instruct African Americans, enslaved or free. Moreover, and irrespective of race, the antebellum South exhibited only the slightest public interest in supporting a system of public schools until almost a full decade after the Civil War (Span, 2001). With regard to the education of freeborn southern Blacks, it was believed that schooling in general would foster seditious and incendiary rhetoric against their designated societal position and American slavery. Consequently, most freeborn southern Blacks bore the responsibility of personally and privately educating their youth. In numerous southern locales, a surprisingly significant number of free Blacks acquired a formal education through their own resources, efforts, and value placed on education. In Baltimore alone, for example, "there were almost 200 adult Blacks studying in 1820" and several private schools sprang up throughout the state of Maryland during this time period (Franklin, 2000).

Southern-born free Black children also received private school instruction from Whites in many locales including the District of Columbia; Raleigh, North Carolina; Fredericksburg, Virginia; and New Orleans, Louisiana. John S. Leary went to a private school for free Blacks in Fayetteville, North Carolina, for nearly eight years. W. A. Pettiford, also from North Carolina, "enjoyed similar advantages in Granville County" (Simmons, 1887, p. 432; Woodson, 1998, p. 132). Similarly, J. F. Boulden, in the slave state of Delaware during the 1840s, attended a private and mixed school for White and Black children (Simmons, 1887; Woodson, 1998). For those able to afford it, private schooling embodied freeborn southern Blacks' formal schooling opportunities during the antebellum era. For instance, wealthy free Blacks in New Orleans and Charleston throughout the time period hired private tutors and established very elaborate private schools for their children. In numerous instances, they extended their generosity and value toward education to economically fixed free Blacks unable to make such accommodations for their children. One noteworthy example occurred in 1840 upon the death of a wealthy free woman of color in New Orleans. Strongly valuing the need for education among the most destitute of the city's free Black residents, she entrusted a large endowment for the creation and maintenance of the *Ecoles des Orphelins Indigents* (the School for Indigent Orphans). During the years prior to the Civil War, the school served as one of the primary places of instruction for countless poor free Black children in New Orleans (Dunbar-Nelson, 1917).

Some well-to-do southern free Blacks were able to challenge their locales discriminatory schooling practices by sending their children to a public or private school outside of their own state. For instance, in 1838 Virginia's free Black populace, as a group, sought permission from the state legislature to send their children to school out of the state (Franklin, 2000). Their collective response, while unsuccessful, challenged Virginia law that staunchly prohibited the teaching of African Americans. Notwithstanding, the majority of free Blacks in the South capable of receiving a rudimentary education did so in the comforts of their respective churches.

From the days of slavery well into the 20th century, the Black church served as the chief agency and edifice of instruction for free—and later freed—southern Blacks. Whereas there is no way to accurately speculate the type or extent of schooling that occurred in these institutions, most historians view the southern Black church as a self-serving entity, and agree that they served a dual purpose in preparing free and freed African American families for life in the hostile, segregated, slave South (Franklin, 1984).

North of slavery, free Blacks concomitantly contested their exclusion or segregation from a quality education. Private schooling and the Black church played an equally significant role in the North as they did in the South, but the struggle against northern freeborn Blacks' blatant educational exclusion also carried over into the arena of public schooling. Woodson (1998) best surmised the persistent struggle of northern Blacks attempting to be part of the nation's antebellum educational efforts. He documented the extent northern-born antebellum free Blacks, despite being purposefully marginalized from local school initiatives, zealously sought an education and invested tremendous time and resources in the establishment of their own system of schools. At the forefront of these independent school efforts were Philadelphia's free Blacks. During the late 1820s and under the leadership of Philadelphia clergyman Richard Allen and businessman William Whipper, Philadelphia's free Blacks organized a number of educational literary societies and schools to promote the educational needs of Blacks. By 1837, Black Philadelphians—approximately 25,000 lived in the city in this year—had established at least 21 schools for Black youth and 17 Sabbath schools. The city's African American residents had also established three literary societies, three debating societies, one moral reform society, and four temperance societies for their overall self-improvement (Porter, 1995).

Similarly, antebellum free Blacks in the cities of Buffalo and Troy, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts, achieved comparable educational successes. In 1837, Black residents in the abolitionist city of Buffalo had two churches and two private schools to accommodate their educational needs. They too had a literary and debating society, and collectively African Americans in Buffalo—approximately 500 lived in Buffalo—had a net worth of approximately $100,000 in property and other assets (Porter, 1995). Also in this year, Troy, New York's 990 free Black residents independently maintained three churches, two private schools, two Sabbath schools, one literary society, one debating society, four moral reform societies, and two temperance societies (Porter, 1995).[5] Free Blacks in Boston also showed their resiliency in educating their children despite the ideology and law restricting their opportunities. By 1850, for example, of the 2,038 free Blacks in the city, almost 1,500 were in school. Moreover, as in Philadelphia, Buffalo, and other major cities in which free Blacks resided, African Americans in Boston established literary and moral reform societies to promote their own educational, personal, and professional self-interests.

CONCLUSION

Despite the societal conditions, laws, or varying restrictions imposed upon them, free and enslaved African Americans managed to acquire some degree of learning during the antebellum era. For antebellum African Americans literacy and schools had specific purposes and was valued for numerous reasons. North of slavery, free Blacks perceived an education as a chief means to challenge their societal status, slavery, segregation, and the myriad of inferiority theories circulating about them throughout the nation. Segregation, by law or cultural practice, restricted or denied many of their educational opportunities, but it did not discourage northern free Blacks from establishing their own schools and services for the betterment of themselves, communities, and race. Southern freeborn Blacks also viewed education as a means of social mobility and protection from the vices burdening them in a racialized society. In spite of the countless laws prohibiting African Americans in the South from being taught a rudimentary education, freeborn southern Blacks established a network of private and independent schooling opportunities for themselves and their children.

So very impressive was the educational determinism of enslaved African Americans. Their efforts and fortitude demonstrated the most profound examples of the value antebellum African Americans maintained toward literacy, knowledge, and their potential usefulness. Despite the slave codes and harsh repercussions associated with a slave learning how to read and write, countless enslaved African Americans were willing to endure severe punishments, maiming, and even their lives for the forbidden skills. Literacy equated empowerment; the power to determine individual identity and to challenge one's enslaved status. Together the educational ambitions and initiatives of free and enslaved antebellum African Americans epitomized their historic determination to persevere in spite of their society's pursuit to subjugate and enslave them. Their demeanor and actions toward acquiring some degree of learning challenged the nation's ideologies and practices regarding the education of African Americans. Moreover, the proactive initiatives of antebellum African Americans served as the precursor to the educational activities of freed African Americans in slavery's aftermath; activities W.E.B. Du Bois would spend much of his intellectual pursuits researching.

NOTES

1. The term "free" with regard to the nonenslaved Black populace in colonial and antebellum America requires some clarification. These Blacks were by societal standards free and not enslaved. However, these individuals were also either descendants of "freed" Blacks or were themselves newly emancipated slaves. This argument contends, in short, that virtually every antebellum "free" Black had a slave past.
2. The second time African American residents in Boston were denied their request for a separate school they employed two men from Harvard College as instructors. Thereafter, Prince Saunders, an experienced diplomatic official of Emperor Christopher of Haiti (then spelled Hayti), and John B. Russworm, a graduate of Amherst and Bowdoin Colleges, respectively, and later governor of the colony of Gape Palmas in southern Liberia, would serve as instructors for this school (Woodson, 1998). Russworm would go on to cofound the nation's first Black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal* with Samuel Cornish in 1827 (Franklin, 1994). By the mid-1830s, Boston Blacks began challenging their predecessors' decision to petition for separate schools. The separate schools established for Boston's Black children offered few advantages in comparison to the better-funded and staffed White schools. They argued for the reintegration of the city's schools, which were over time segregated by personal sentiment and cultural practice, not law. Boston's school officials, however, refused to accommodate this request. They declared the city's Black and White schools as "separate but equal" institutions. In 1849, Benjamin F. Roberts, on behalf of his 5-year-old daughter Sara, disagreed and sued the city of Boston for perpetuating a system of unequal segregated schools. Sara Roberts had to walk past five White elementary schools to attend Smith School, a dilapidated educational facility for the area's Black children. Roberts argued the Smith School was vastly inferior to the five White schools his daughter had to walk past, and requested his daughter be allowed to attend one of them to accommodate her educational needs. This case went before the Massachusetts Supreme Court and it was the first legal suit against school segregation in the country. Roberts's lawyers, abolitionist Charles Sumner, and Boston's first Black attorney, Robert Morris, argued that all persons were equal before Massachusetts law and that race-based distinctions were not permissible in the state. They further argued that racial segregation characterized all African Americans as inferior and that a segregated Black school could not equal a segregated White school because of the "stigma associated with segregation." The Massachusetts Supreme Court rejected their argument. Their ruling permitted segregated schools as long as they were equally provided for. Roberts, however, was not dismayed by the decision. He continued his pursuit on behalf of his daughter and in 1855, amid the nation's struggle to settle the boundaries and future of slavery, Massachusetts legislature passed a law prohibiting race-based schooling. Still, as desegregation scholar Jeffrey A. Raffel notes, *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849) "was the first use of the separate but equal doctrine. This case was cited in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision (1896) as support for the segregation ruling, "for if even in Massachusetts, where the rights of Blacks had been enforced, segregation was considered legal, surely it would be legal in the South" (1998, p. 221).

3. In 1817, the American Colonization Society (ACS) was organized to interest emancipated or free Blacks in migrating to Africa, in particular the American colony of Liberia. The society's greatest success came in its first 10 years. By 1831, abolitionists, led by William Lloyd Garrison, publicly opposed the ACS, arguing that its purpose was to rid the nation of its free Black population to cater to the interest of slaveholders. In total, approximately 12,000 Blacks would migrate to Africa because of the efforts of this organization (Franklin, 2000).
4. From 1936 to 1938, Federal Writers' Project writers and journalists under the aegis of the Works Progress Administration interviewed over 2,300 former slaves from across the American South. These former slaves, most born in the concluding years of slavery or during the Civil War, provided firsthand accounts of their experiences. These narratives remain an unrivaled resource for understanding the lives of America's 4 million slaves. The narratives are collected in a 41-volume series edited by George Rawick titled *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Greenwood Press, 1972–1979). However, the interviews themselves present some problems as historical data and have been a persistent source of contention for historians debating their validity and usefulness in understanding American slavery and the slave's worldview. Age, dependency, the inexperience and race of the interviewer, and regional biases all played crucial roles in the responses offered by ex-slaves. Yet, as Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., properly insist, such shortcomings should not dismiss the tremendous value these interviews maintain as valuable resources on the American slave experience (Davis & Gates, 1985).
5. Dorothy Porter has done the most extensive work in antebellum free Black literary societies. Her work demonstrates the extent that free Blacks—North and South—valued literacy and how they attempted to educate themselves at a time the nation was restricting or ignoring their educational demands. Here is an abbreviated listing of the literary societies that Porter had identified between 1820 and 1850: Negro Literary Societies in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Demonsthenian Institute (1837), Edgeworth Society (1837), Female Literary Society, (1831), Gilbert Lyceum (1841), Library Company of Colored Persons (1833), Minerva Literary Association (1834), Reading Room Society (1828), Rush Library and Debating Society (1836); in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Theban Literary Society (1831), Young Men's Literary and Moral Reform Society (1837); in New York City: Female Literary Society (1836), Ladies Literary Society (1834), New York African Clarkson Society (1829), New York Garrison Literary Association (1834), New York Philomathean Society (1830), Phoenix Society (1833); in Albany, New York: two literary societies (before 1843); in Buffalo, New York: Debating Society (before 1837), Young Ladies Literary Society (before 1837); Rochester, New York: Debating Society (before 1843), Ladies Literary and Dorcas Society (1833); in Troy, New York: Debating Society (before 1837); Literary Society (before 1837), Mental and Moral Improvement Society (before 1837); in Boston, Massachusetts: Adelphic Union for the Promotion of Literature and Science (1836); Afric-American Female Intelligence Society (before 1835), Thompson Literary and Debating Society (before 1835), Young Men's Literary Society (before 1845); in New Bedford, Massachusetts: Debating Society (1837); in Hartford, Connecticut: Literary and Religious Institution (1834); in Providence, Rhode Island: Literary Society (1833),

Debating Society (before 1837); in Newark, New Jersey: Tyro and Literary Association (1832); in Baltimore, Maryland: Young Men's Mental Improvement Society (before 1835); Phoenix Society (before 1835); in Washington, DC: Debating Society (before 1837), Literary Society (before 1837); Washington Conventional Society (1834); in Cincinnati, Ohio: Literary Society (before 1843); in Columbus, Ohio: Literary Society (before 1843); in Detroit, Michigan: Young Men's Lyceum and Debating Society (before 1846) (Porter, 1936).

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CHAPTER 2

CURRICULUM, CULTURE, AND POWER

Reshaping the Education of African Americans

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Although the calendar marks a new century, the containment, control and subordination of African Americans remain at the heart of America's public policy. While its middle class has expanded and consolidated, the current socio-political and economic status of Black Americans remain troublesome. Blacks continue to occupy the lower strata of income, literacy, and respect. Urban centers with large Black populations are now "free fire zones" for police who have the green light to shoot at will. More Black males are supervised by the penal system than are enrolled in college. Urban renewal, America's version of ethnic cleansing, finds African Americans being scattered and displaced as the gentry are lured back into once-blighted inner cities. Added to the material realities of Black life, there is substantial evidence that the White racial attitudes of an earlier era are resurfacing, or perhaps never disappeared.

Within education little has changed. Headlines in major newspapers announce that Blacks continue to fall below anticipated achievement as

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measured in standardized tests. Dropout rates remain high and Black youth are demonized as disrupters of civility and order. The "savage inequities" described by Jonathan Kozol (1991) are as glaring today as ever.

After a decade of uninterrupted economic prosperity, poverty and despair are still very much evident in the land of plenty. How can we make sense of this non-sense? What can describe the ongoing social, economic, educational, and political status of African Americans? In part, it appears that the underclass is a permanent fixture in American social life as the nation's economic, class, racial, and power arrangements engender stratification and inequity. Twenty-first century American democracy appears to be perfectly compatible and comfortable with fierce class, racial, and gender divisions. The continued pyramiding of the economic structure threatens to concentrate the nation's wealth into the hands of a plutocracy indifferent to the plight of the powerless and the moneyless. America's monopolists, plutocrats, and kleptocrats now surpass European feudal monarchs in measures of wealth and power concentration. Despite the promises of a major technological revolution, there is every indication that people of color will remain locked in at the bottom of the new economic order.

UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION, POWER, AND REFORM

What does all this mean in an era of education reform? Every governor, mayor, and public servant has jumped on the education bandwagon. School reform proposals are coming from the left, the right, and in between. Some are proposing schools of choice, others desire a return to basic education, while others are seeking more sensitized teachers and a curriculum more culturally congruent with the lives of oppressed peoples. While there are scattered claims to gains and progress, African American communities mostly are not yet pleased.

The rhetoric and demand for reform is often hasty, hysterical, disingenuous, partisan, politically motivated, and unaccompanied by analysis. Many of today's reformers, including the honest ones, often shoot from the hip with no historical or sociopolitical referents. The problems surrounding the education of African Americans are complex and are conditioned by 400 years of history. The decontextualization of Black education cannot help but lead to myopic and fragmented assessments.

In this chapter I hope to situate Black education within a sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociointellectual context. I discuss Black education and power. I want to reassert the necessity to both *historicize* and *politicize* Black education. We need to understand Black education as politically constructed public policy with profound societal implications. More specifically we want to understand the education of Blacks as part of a struggle for power where the oppressed are locked in a pitch battle with the oppressor. This is not just about better teaching, this is about the lion and the lamb.

Many explorations of Black education are lacking sociopolitical, historical, and economic context. Education is about power as well as pedagogy. Within American capitalism, power is the concentrated expression of economics. The golden rule means he who has the gold, rules. Black education has always been connected to industrialization, labor economics, technology, and the expropriation of profits and wealth in our society. Segregation never meant separate but equal, instead it meant a subordinated group would be the beasts of burden with little or no remuneration. In fact, the problem with the majority of Black Americans today remains little remuneration.

As a curriculum historian and theorist, I have questions and issues. One of my central concerns is how we conceptualize reform within and connected to the sociopolitical and economic context. How can programs designed to improve education for Blacks be counter-hegemonic as well as good pedagogy? How can we embrace a "social point of view" (Rugg, 1947) in our deliberations? Should we be looking only for better teaching strategies or should we look for liberatory concepts of education that address our sociohistorical position?

The "social point of view" is most often lost in today's discourse. Many sociological commentators, past and present, have been overlooked in today's reform discourse as the focus on classroom technology prevails. Throughout this chapter I refer to and draw from educational theorists who embrace the "social point of view" in our larger quest to understand education, curriculum, race, culture, power, and reform. To set the stage for further discussion, I would first like to suggest that the politics and ideology of colonialism have influenced the last 150 years of Black education.

EDUCATING AFRICAN AMERICANS: COLONIAL FOUNDATIONS

Perhaps the least articulated and most important aspect of public education in America is its colonial underpinnings. Public education did not arise in an intellectual and temporal vacuum. The modern system (Tyack, 1974) of public education as we now know it was shaped at a time of imperial conquest and swagger. Late 19th century America was becoming a world power where people of color, the world over, were increasingly viewed as inferior. The politics and ideology of imperialism framed the prevailing intellectual climate and societal arrangements of the time.

Traditional histories of American education rarely explore the social science community that significantly influenced the intellectual thinking of the late 19th century. Theories of inferiority undergirded discourses on social development, race, and education. The influence of "scientific racism," the attempts to prove racial inferiority through measurement and eugenics has been extensively described by Watkins (2001), Selden (1999), Tucker (1994), Gould (1981), Ehrlich and Feldman (1977), and others. Alongside "scientific racism," similar notions of human development were concocted. Critical anthropologists help illuminate such views.

Michael Blakey (1991) identifies theorizing within physical anthropology, which suggests that Europeans are intellectually evolved while Blacks are evolved in nature:

> Yet, the European diaspora is shown to be motivated apart from nature, by spiritual or moral, intellectual, political, economic and such peculiar pursuits of Homo sapiens. Indeed, an examination of the model for "man the wise" reveals that his is usually depicted as a European in dioramas of hominid evolution, despite its misrepresentation of the biology of modern sapiens. W. Motague Cobb (1943), otherwise uses an Afro-American; one of many possible "hybrid" groups that are the most representative of modern humanity.

In the following I explore examples of anthropological applications of the nature politic. In this sense, naturalism is used…

1. to define the Third World and people of color as primitive, emotive, and subhuman, contrasted with cultural/civilized European "man."
2. to align Third World and people of color with natural resources, which "man" ordinarily (or naturally) exploits, without consideration of oppression. Oppression becomes a meaningless concept under these assumptions, making for an apologetic explanation.
3. and to convey an appearance of objectivity to the study of these people. (p. 17)

Other works, for example Lybarger (1981, 1983) and Watkins (2001), describe the emergent discipline of sociology wherein many of its influential theorists such as Franklin Giddings were consumed with quantifying intellectual, behavioral, and moral differences between the races. Beyond the anthropologists and sociologists, we know a great deal about the social and racial views of the behavioral psychologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Racial supremist Edward Thorndike has been described to us in the writings of Karier (1986), Clifford (1984), and others.

To fully understand education, power, and race in America we need understanding of this historical context. Our system of education was greatly influenced by the politics of colonialism and the colonial mentality. It was built on the foundations of human inequality, race difference, and hierarchy. I suggest that the structure of inequality and colonialism has continued to permeate public education in America throughout the 20th century. There is a politics and ideology associated with unequal funding, testing, special education referrals, discipline, the curriculum, and so on. This is what a political sociology of education reveals to us. The ultimate political sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois was among the first to deepen our understanding of the education and oppression of African Americans.

THE DU BOIS CRITIQUES: ESTABLISHING FOUNDATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

Du Bois offered an uncommon and penetrating view of oppression and the education of Black Americans around the turn of the 20th century. Like few others, he linked education to power and control. He understood that educating Blacks was part of a larger agenda. Disturbed by industrial training, he nevertheless saw any organized education for Blacks as helpful. He wrote in 1930:

> Negro industrial training in the United States has accomplishments of which it has a right to be proud; but it too has not solved its problem…It made the Negro patient when impatience would have killed him…It has made many Negroes seek the friendship of their white fellow citizens, even at the cost of insult and caste. And thus through a wide strip of our country it has brought peace and not a sword. (Aptheker, 1973, pp. 68–69)

Du Bois understood that true liberation had not been attained nor was it being offered to Blacks at that time:

> The insistent problem of human happiness is still with us. We American Negroes are not a happy people. We feel perhaps as never before the sting and bitterness of our struggle. Our little victories won here and there serve but to reveal the shame of our continuing semislavery and social caste. We are torn asunder within our own group because of the rasping pressure of the struggle without. We are as a race not simply dissatisfied, we are embodied Dissatisfaction. (Aptheker, 1973, p. 80)

Throughout his writings Du Bois offered clues and suggestions of what a liberatory education might be about. In what may be considered his quintessential statement on the topic, he noted:

> There can be no iota of doubt that the chief trouble with the world and the overwhelming difficulty with American Negroes is widespread ignorance; the fact that we are not thoroughly acquainted with human history; of what men and peoples have thought and done in the seven thousand years of our

> cultural life. We are especially unacquainted with modern science; with the facts of matter and its constitution; with the meaning of time and space; with chemical reaction and electrical phenomena; with history of the machine and the tool; with the unfolding of life in the vegetable and animal kingdoms; with the history of human labor; the development of our knowledge of the mind; the practical use of the languages of the world; and the methods of logical reasoning, beginning and ending with mathematics. (Aptheker, 1973, p. 109)

Du Bois understood that emancipatory education must, in the final analysis, help Blacks break with the economic and political system oppressing them. He wrote:

> What to do? We went to school. But our industrial schools taught no industrial history, no labor movement, no social reform-only technique just when the technique of skilled trades was changing to mass industry. Our colleges taught the reactionary economics of Northern schools. We landed in bitter and justifiable complaint and sought a way out by complaining. Our mistake lay not in the injustice of our cause, but in our naive assumption that a system of industrial monopoly that was making money out of our exploitation, was going voluntarily to help us escape its talons. (Aptheker, 1973, p. 123)

America's long history of oppression and racial divisions suggested that the education of Black people purposefully accommodates oppressed people to their "place." Carter G. Woodson (1933), in his classic work, wrote:

> At a Negro summer school two years ago, a white instructor gave a course on the Negro, using for his text a work which teaches that Whites are superior to the Blacks. When asked by one of the students why he used such a textbook the instructor replied that he wanted them to get that point of view. Even schools for Negroes, then, are places where they must be convinced of their inferiority. (p. 2)

Thus Du Bois, bolstered by Woodson, began to provide a general blueprint on how we could assess the education of Black Americans. It was not simply about teaching styles or the curriculum, it was about learning that would confront power and place. It was about learning connected with emancipation. Modern day theorists have provided even more analytical ammunition to understand education and power.

ON CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND POWER

We have long known that a central purpose of our educational system is to maintain and transmit the dominant culture. These tasks are more urgent in an uneven and unequal society trying to maintain stasis. Spring (1991) has argued that public education in America has three purposes: political, social, and economic.

Among the political objectives are the creation of political consensus, the maintenance of existing power relations and the socializing of individuals into the system. In short, this may be referred to as citizenship training. In such training, students are taught that the system is greater than the individual. Citizens must be willing to serve the state. The political history of the country is legitimized in the process of building consensus.

Among the social purposes of schooling, according to Spring (1991), are social control, social betterment, and the reduction of tensions caused by economic inequalities. Thus, public schooling can be an inexpensive form of policing given possible tensions between the included and the excluded. School holds out the promise of hope, social leveling, and better lives for all. With little focus on social problems, school often presents a romantic view of social amelioration. Social control is achieved by fostering a common value system and moral code of conduct.

The economic purposes of schooling are to increase the national wealth, advance technology, and rationalize the workforce. Through sorting and credentialing, schools identify and welcome some into the highly skilled areas while others are dispatched to the common jobs. School socializes preworkers for the workplace by teaching obedience, the dynamics of the reward system, and training for a division of labor. The workplace socialization offered by schools is obscured by the marketplace concept, where it appears that all placements are neutral and achieved by supply and demand.

Finally, Spring (1991) sees school as an active agent in the scheme of social ordering. He sees schools tied to the mission of the nation-state both domestically and internationally. Schools are politically charged institutions that can be used to shape ideology and public opinion.

If the sociopolitical objective of the traditional educational system is to maintain and replicate existing societal relationships, what does this mean for African Americans? What can we say about the last century of Black education? How should we historicize, politicize, and problematize this educational experience? How can we craft approaches to teaching and curriculum that confront power yet are realistic, relevant, and meaningful? What are the possibilities for improved education grounded in the sociopolitical and cultural history of Black people? One step in that direction is to better understand the epistemological framework connected to the Black experience.

ON BLACK EPISTEMOLOGIES

Building on the work of Du Bois, I have argued (Watkins, 1993) that we cannot understand Black education and any relationship with the curriculum outside a sociopolitical context. This argument suggests education is connected to power, powerlessness, and peoples' relationship to the structures of power. I believe then and now that

> Black curriculum theorizing, on the other hand is inextricably tied to the history of the Black experience in the United States. Black social, political, and intellectual development in all cases evolved under socially oppressive and politically repressive circumstances involving physical and intellectual duress and tyranny. Black America's socio-educational development is thus distorted, unnatural, and stunted. The Black response to servitude and exclusion has run the gamut from capitulation to accommodation to outright defiance. Thus, the way African Americans have developed their views on education, and especially the curriculum is connected to their socio-historical realities. (p. 322)

I identified several epistemological frameworks around which Black education has been constructed. Distinctions were made between those models that were imposed and those which developed indigenously. A brief summary of that discussion surveys several orientations.

The Booker T. Washington model of Black education has been widely discussed (Bullock, 1967; Anderson, 1988; Watkins, 2001). Without Black participation, this accommodationist orientation was designed by White missionaries, promoted and refined by racist social scientists and educators, and finally funded by corporate industrialists. The ideological importance of the accommodationist curriculum was that it taught of the triumph of Western civilization. It taught Blacks of their evolutionary "place" within history. Slavery was simply part of the unfolding of history and now we all can move on into the democratic order.

Accomodationist education was the ideal political platform around which to socialize Blacks into a subordinate status. It wedded opportunity to containment. It posited that Blacks could obtain basic education for the manual labor market yet be discouraged from participation in the political life of the nation.

Black nationalist and African-centered education are rooted in centuries of oppression and exclusion. Their curriculum was not a part of public schooling but certainly found sympathy and advocacy among the disenfranchised African American. The Negro Convention movements of the early 19th century gave rise to separatist and emigrationist thinking about racial identification, Black pride, and the glory of Africa. The curricula of these movements looked to uplift the Black civilization crushed by colonialism and slavery. By the early 20th century, emigrationist sentiment swept Black America as Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association became the largest mass movement of its day. I wrote of Afrocentric education (Watkins, 1993):

> In many ways, the nationalist and separatist outlooks may be viewed as forerunners of the contemporary Afrocentric idea. The Black Nationalist outlook is also reflected in part, in contemporary renditions of Afrocentrism. The reclaiming of traditional African culture drives the placement of "African ideals" at the center of historical, social, communicative, and pedagogical dialogue. Ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization provides a reference point for Afrocentrics to reconnect African Americans to their spiritual origins (Asante, 1987).
>
> Afrocentrism suggests the recapturing and regeneration of a once great continent and people who may now be culturally adrift. Redemption, renewal, integrity, and a sense of community are but a few themes underlying African cultural identification. Paraphrasing Ivan Van Sertima (1990), as Black people piece together the shattered world of Africa, we make ourselves whole again (p. 331)

Thus, for Black people, often denied formal schooling, community, and political education, an out-of-school curriculum has been a significant part of the learning process. For oppressed people, ideas about liberation are inextricably connected to intellectual life.

Liberal education has long been a part of the Black educational and curriculum tradition. It seeks to cultivate the whole person for participation in the community and the democracy. Liberal educators, including Du Bois, wanted Blacks to explore the arts, the natural sciences, literature, and the social sciences. A liberal education aims to create the modern and well-rounded person, capable of independent thinking, intelligent ideas, and self-governance.

Although another model, Social Reconstructionism, has not been directly associated with Black education, there are political and ideological connections worthy of attention and clarification. The Social Reconstructionist movement was born of Progressive and radical social democratic thought in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Fueled by the Great Depression and the nation's changing intellectual climate, educational reconstructionists wanted schools to participate in the movement to create a more egalitarian society and a new social order. Reconstructionists, such as Harold Rugg, wrote on race issues favoring equality. The connections between Black radical intellectuals and the Reconstructionists have not been explored. Black philosopher and social theorist Alain Locke contributed to the Reconstructionist journal *Social Frontier* in 1940. I have argued (Watkins, 1989, 1993) that Du Bois, by virtue of his views and connections, was intellectually connected to this group. Later in this chapter I flesh out some views of social reconstructionism as I find them relevant to Black education today.

THE ORDINATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The sources and nature of knowledge, epistemology, has been of particular interest in the last several decades. Traditional assumptions held that school knowledge was neutral, eternal, enduring, and true. It must be true, otherwise how did it get into the textbooks and the classroom. British sociologists of education such as Bernstein (1971) and Young (1971) and American critical theorists such as Apple (1979, 1982) have undertaken provocative theorizing in this area. In the broadest terms, they have argued that knowledge is inextricably connected to power and culture. School and social knowledge is selected, constructed, and processed. In short, knowledge is not neutral, it is political and filled with class, race, and gender bias.

Apple, as much as any curriculum theorist, has taught us to ask, whose knowledge? Knowledge is connected to ideology and world views and a view of society and social relationships. Apple (1990) writes:

> Of course, we never act in a vacuum. The very realization that education is deeply implicated in the politics of culture makes this clear. After all, the decision to define some groups' knowledge as worthwhile to pass on to future generations while other groups' culture and history hardly see the light of day says something extremely important about who has power in society. (p. viii)

Furthermore:

> Behind all of these issues lay a particular set of questions. What is the relationship between culture and economy? How does ideology function? It is not enough to answer these questions in the abstract, however. As people concerned with education, we need to answer them in relation to one major institution, the school. Thus, we must rigorously scrutinize the form and content of the curriculum, the social relations within the classroom, and the ways we currently conceptualize these things, as cultural expressions of particular groups in particular institutions at particular times. (p. x)

Thus in our society the dominant group's ideological worldview frames the knowledge base. They ordain knowledge as consistent with and legitimating of their position and interests. They desire that their story be recreated and reproduced. Hence our core knowledge presents Europe as the civilizing force in world history. Only the great art, music, and literature are taught in the school curriculum. In America, children are taught that the world has been molded by the actions of great White men.

Later work by Apple (1993) argues that the stakes have gotten higher in the recent period or "conservative restoration" where the corporate ordering of society has intensified. The conservatives have sought to renegotiate the social contract, decrease government obligations, increase productive efficiency, and manage social mobility. Authoritarian organs of coercion and containment have been summoned to help accomplish these objectives. Idea management is an indispensable ingredient of the conservative restoration. Every effort must be made to foster acquiescence to the new social order. What counts as "official" knowledge cannot be left to chance. The turn to basic education and scripted lessons fit the notion of constraining ideas.

In recent years the apparatus of the state has become directly involved in the enforcement and transmittal of "official" knowledge. The federal and state governments are intervening in idea management as never before. High stakes testing has provided a guarantor that certain concepts are taught.

THE PLAGUE OF HIGH STAKES TESTING: DEFORMING THE SCHOOLS

Alfred Binet's assignment to identify special needs students in France nearly 100 years ago has forever changed education in the United States. Embraced by the scientism and efficiency movements of that time, testing commanded attention then and now. Our schools have become deeply and totally committed to the concept of testing and America's children are now among the most tested in the entire world (Kohn, 2001). What are these tests for? Who are the advocates for these tests? What is the impact of these tests on schools? What might they mean for the African American school population?

Noam Chomsky (1972) suggests that tests are the "building blocks" for the continued and new class system. He argues that a social and political system rooted in inequality cries out for legitimization. Moreover, we have long appealed to science and numbers in the effort to explain inequality. Chomsky says we have developed a scientific apologia for privilege.

A brief examination of the history of the testing movement reveals that it was initiated by the same forces attempting to scientize racism. In my work, *The White Architects of Black Education* (Watkins, 2001), I have summarized the movement of scientific racism. Prominent behavioral psychologists, educators, medical doctors, social scientists, statisticians, eugenicists, and politicians were part of the effort to prove, through a variety of measures, that people of color are biologically and genetically inferior. Those same ideological forces, in some cases the same people, were among the strongest advocates of testing in the early 20th century.

What began as scientific racism has developed into a psuedoscience of its own. The commodification of intelligence and measurement has become institutionalized in our society. *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) is the most recent attempt by modern-day scientific racists and sophists to segregate people by "intelligence." A collection of essays by Kincheloe, Steinberg, and Gresson, titled *Measured Lies: The Bell Curve Examined* (1996), provides extensive discussion of this phenomenon.

The question of who is driving the testing movement is of paramount importance. It is not a movement of the teachers. It does not seem to be inspired by parents. It certainly is not demanded by the students! Who then is pushing this movement, and why?

Cloaking themselves in the language of accountability, political bureaucracies have seized the schools in many major cities and more seizures are threatened. We do not always know why municipal leaders such as those in Chicago, Cleveland, and other cities have taken over the governance of city schools. Is it to facilitate urban renewal and bring middle-class Whites, desirous of good schools, back into the city? Is it to increase their power base? Do they have original ideas on bettering schools others do not possess?

Whatever the reason, school seizures are a fact of life. Beyond the local level, national politicians have climbed aboard the school reform issue. In almost all cases the political figures are demanding more testing. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001) under the signature of President George W. Bush set forth a national agenda for high stakes testing.

Similar to preceding federal statements, such as *Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education Task Force on Education, 1983), this one too is born of hysteria. Page 1 reads "Today, nearly 70 percent of inner city fourth graders are unable to read at a basic level on national reading tests. Our high school seniors trail students in Cyprus and South Africa on international math tests."

This document is among the most forceful and punitive ever issued by the Feds on testing. It calls for rewarding school districts that are successful in meeting standardized test benchmarks. Those rewards are federal dollars paid upon performance goals. Under the proposal, states can lose funds if testing goals are not met. Three consecutive years of failure means that Title 1 money can be used for choice. A climate of fear has been created in states where similar initiatives have been employed. As Alfie Kohn (2001) suggests, standardized tests now provide photo opportunities for politicians.

Owing to the hysteria and the immediate need to meet benchmarks, few school professionals have reflected on what high stakes testing is doing to schools, especially the curriculum. These big tests have in fact reshaped school. They have turned schools into giant test-taking centers where frightened teachers and administrators are forced to teach to the test to make their scores. Moreover, tests have cannibalized the curriculum wherein some subjects have been eliminated and others relegated to insignificance or the "afternoon" curriculum. Many electives, usually the expressive subjects such as art, music, dance, and so on have been curtailed. Physical education and even recess are under threat of extinction. Inquiry and exploration, the real purposes of education, have been lost to tests. Many teachers have proclaimed that standardized tests have killed the love of learning.

Finally, what do tests mean to African Americans and other involuntary minorities? While Black students have made discernable gains in standardized tests over the past decades, most indices suggest they lag behind the majority group. Certainly the reasons lie in history, privilege, advantage, access, socioeconomic status, and other sociological factors. Beyond those factors, there is much reason to believe African American youngsters do not believe society's reward system always applies to them. Hence, they might be less invested in schooling for certification. In short, Blacks recognize the continuation of oppression and exploitation.

In the last analysis, the inner city, mostly African American, schools are going to be most dramatically affected. It is they who will be placed on probation and singled out for not making their numbers, thus "justifying" the demand for school choice. In this context school choice can only mean tiered education where the public inner-city schools are left to languish.

Idea and curriculum management are not new, but are more politicized and intensified in this conservative environment. The alienation of the curriculum has created a firestorm of opposition. Critics and reformers, led by African American scholars and educators, have turned our attention to the role of culture and cultural congruence in teaching and learning.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION: THE ENDURING MARRIAGE

Recent scholarship on the relationship of culture and education has been illuminating. Late 19th and early 20th century educators focused on the cognitive processes associated with maturation. Then culture was rarely if ever considered as a variable in the learning process. We know that learning is best facilitated in the environment and language of the familiar. We also now understand that cultural discontinuity and discord provide obstacles to the imparting and reception of knowledge. We understand that culture is a major factor in how children and adults construct and reconstruct experiences, both of which are central to learning.

Our understanding of culture has expanded in recent times. While culture binds people together, it is conditioned by history, race, power, language, geography, family structure, and so on. Culture helps us make sense of our world. Educational and cultural theorist Mwalimu Shujaa (1994) explains this dynamic:

> The failure to take into account differing cultural orientations and unequal power relations among groups that share membership in a society is a major problem in conceptualizations that equate schooling and education. Cultural orientations "involve cognitive, affective, and directive processes in people's strategies to solve problems.... They are tenacious, persistent, superorganic principles that resist pressures for change brought about by the institutional transformation of society." However, cultural orientations must be understood to exist in a context of group historical experience. The African-American cultural identity has been and continues to be influenced by the U.S. social context, but it is essential to note that the African-American cultural orientation also represents an experiential context. Thus, while African-Americans exist within the U.S. social context, they also exist within an African historical-cultural continuum that predates that social context and would continue to exist even if the nation-state and its societal arrangements were to transform or demise. (pp. 14–15)

In *Race and Education* (Watkins, Lewis, & Chou, 2001), I attempted to review theorizing of teacher educators concerned with culturally relevant pedagogy. In general, they argue that learning is impeded when it occurs in an alien or hostile cultural environment. The work of Joyce King (1994) and Carol Lee (1995) represent samples of this outlook. The following are excerpts of what I wrote of their work.

> King writes of the "whitening of Egypt and the denial of African origins of Greek culture among the insults found in the traditional curriculum." Rather than enlightenment, Black children are scarred by the curriculum. They are left alienated, disaffected, and isolated. King highlights the affective damage of the school curriculum. She calls for a freeing, or a "BEing free," which requires the "emancipation of human knowledge." She calls for an education that nurtures "cognitive autonomy" and transcends "dysconscious, unfree habits of mind." She calls for a curriculum rooted in the Afro/human legacy. That legacy, for King, offers a pedagogy that "challenges the social justifications of poverty, sexism, human ranking, exploitation, racism and unhealthy environments." It rejects the "colonizing mission" of school as it rejects dominance. (p. 58)

Furthermore:

> Carol Lee's African-centered pedagogy is among the most thoughtful curriculum proposals. Enjoying wide support, it might be viewed as a prototype for

> African-centered education. It involves both teaching and curriculum. She views it as a "liberation pedagogy." It is geared toward "humanizing": however, she asserts that there are different conceptions of what that means. Absent universal norms, she calls for a pedagogy that is culturally specific, that is, African centered. The curriculum and teaching practice should have several objectives: to legitimize African stores of knowledge; to embrace positive community and cultural practices; to build on indigenous languages; to reinforce and idealize the family, race, and social relationships; to promote self-determination; and to support critical consciousness. (p. 59)

King, Lee, and others have problematized the issue in unambiguous terms. While they are being pathologized and demonized, Black children are not to blame for the problems in education or in the larger society. Rooted in colonialism and the political economy of oppression, public education in America was never intended to create an egalitarian society or make the bottom level with the top. Public education has been a part of the master plan to make African American semi-citizens with semi-freedom. In that regard it has worked perfectly. Where do we go from here? With what we now know, what prospects exist to create vibrant and relevant education within a society committed to the politics of the past? In short, how can we create a liberatory and transformative and culturally relevant education within a society that continues to limit Black progress? Perhaps what is needed is an insurgent education. I believe another look at social reconstructionism is in order.

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTIONISM IN THEORY AND ACTION

I have alluded to social reconstructionism throughout this chapter in hopes of setting the stage for its consideration here. I believe the African American discourse and literature has overlooked important tenets of reconstructionist theory that might be relevant. I draw from the writings of Harold Rugg (1936, 1947, 1952) as representative of the reconstructionist theory to be considered. First, I explore some of Rugg's views and consider any importance and relevance to Black education.

Rugg was a social democrat who believed public education was anachronistic. He saw a dynamic, rapidly changing society employing an educational system mired in the past. In overarching terms, Rugg (1952) believed our society had no "theory" of education. We had no theory of education because we had no theory of societal development. Rugg favored a theory of societal development, which embraced collectivism and a cooperative society. Such a theory would be sensitive to people's culture, morality, and beliefs. Additionally, this theory would be grounded in the history of ideas and would try to make sense of a world torn by strife.

While sounding daunting, Rugg did not believe such a macro theory was out of reach. He identified four attempts to construct such theory but suggested they all were flawed or not applicable to the United States. They were Social Darwinism, an apologia for elite formation; Dialectical Materialism, wherein Rugg did not see communist society as the final synthesis; the Cyclic Theory of Oswald Spengler, thought by Rugg to be mechanistic; and Pareto's Theory of the Circulation of Groups of Elite Rulers, wherein Rugg did not see the rise and fall of societies as measured by the status of the elite.

Finding weakness in those grand theories, Rugg believed a realistic assessment of our society was possible. Building on the historic treasury of ideas, Rugg believed eight crucial issues in American society must be understood to develop a theory from which a relevant school curriculum could be crafted. The eight include: (1) an understanding of the tensions of our industrial-democratic culture; (2) a description of the economic-political characteristics of our economy; (3) an understanding of our human resources viz-à-viz the labor market; (4) a full description of the benefits and challenges of a privately owned economy; (5) the meaning of money and our monetary system; (6) the dynamics and use of our national wealth; (7) the economic cycle and prospects for downturns; and finally (8) the role of occupation and automation-caused displacement.

Rugg's voluminous writings are far too exhaustive to present here; however, there is something profound in his analysis. As a social democrat concerned with the effects of the maldistribution of wealth, Rugg sees something lacking in our broad societal analysis. Rugg argues that we have built a culture and set of sociocultural ideas devoid of an understanding of our material realities. I interpret his argument to mean that the distribution, and possibilities for the distribution, of wealth are determining factors in our intellectual and cultural life. It is precisely this issue that is obscured in American sociocultural thought. America pretends it is a classless society where unlimited opportunity awaits all. Rugg holds that we cannot advance a collective ideology that ignores the distribution of wealth. His ultimate conclusion is that we need a sociopolitical and economic assessment of culture. We need a political economy of social life. We need a political economy of school and the curriculum. Like Marx, Rugg is saying that the material reality of people is a determining factor in all their social life. How is this relevant to Black social thought and education and, most importantly, are there any lessons here for possible educational reform. I think so!

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTIONISM AND BLACK EDUCATION

The political and economic history of African Americans points to one inescapable conclusion, that is, the subordination and oppression of a people. If the mandate for Black education is liberation and social transformation, then a scientific theory is called for. In this case I find Rugg provocative.

Rugg insists that we understand where we are situated in the material history of our existence. What is going on around us? In the case of African Americans, for example, we are surrounded by the most sweeping technological revolution in human history. The possibilities for economic plentitude now exist where no one should live in want. The realities, however, are quite different. In the midst of abundance, Black people still want. As Du Bois said so poignantly, our country is rich yet our people are poor. Is this relevant to a transformative pedagogy?

I have advocated (Watkins, 2001) that reconstructionism be joined to multicultural education. I also believe that reconstructionism can contribute to the ideological core of the kind of culturally relevant, exciting education earlier described by contemporary theorists. I think reconstructionism offers several concepts and themes for Black educators and curricularists to build upon.

First, reconstructionism adds an inquiry component where students must examine the material realities of their lives. As a former high school social studies and history teacher, my most engaging lessons were those that explored race and power. Reconstructionism is about questioning power and reality. Why are people of color disproportionately poor? What has been the labor history of Blacks from slavery to today? What was Black life like under American apartheid? In short, reconstructionist teaching and curriculum is about social inquiry. It aims to identify inequities and injustice.

Second, reconstructionism is about social change and equity. Lessons on the civil rights movement, revolutionary and anticolonial movements in Africa, and youth culture movements suggest that social change and a more just and egalitarian society is possible and desirable. The notion that an unjust world cries out for change is an underlying theme of reconstructionism. Reconstructionist George Counts (1932) asked if the schools could help build a new social order—his answer was a resounding yes.

Third, reconstructionism underscores the role of the individual in the making of history. This concept says that I, an individual, armed with ideas, am not a slave of the system. Reconstructionism says ideas can become a material force when embraced. The empowerment of individuals and legitimization of the individual response is honored here.

Finally, reconstructionism is perfectly consistent with and supportive of culturally relevant pedagogy. It does not seek to create or impose culture but to unearth the empowering aspects of the existing culture. Though it has never been applied, I firmly believe reconstructionism is suited to contemporary models of curriculum and teaching for self-determination.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I present no grand theory or panacea to offer for the improved education of African American children. I have attempted to put forth several issues for theorists, scholars, practitioners, critics, and reformers to consider as they go about their work. I would like to leave the reader with several overarching thoughts that guide me.

First and foremost, public education in America must change wherein it now contributes to and reproduces the inequities of the past. No society, including our own, can survive where obscene and ostentatious wealth confront unspeakable poverty and want. A nation that privileges a dominant group over subordinate groups can never find tranquility. We hear the street protestors shout, "No justice, no peace!"

Second, we must always be historical and political as we problematize the education of Black people. The education of Blacks is much more complicated than a need for better teachers, more money, and better books. Black education is inextricably tied to the "Negro question," which has been at the core of American public policy for four centuries. The education of African Americans is about power and has monumental consequences. We must always connect to the larger sociopolitical context to provide a broad understanding of race in this country.

Finally, I have longed to excavate and resuscitate the reconstructionist notion, its theories, prescriptions, and excitement. It was among the most provocative and interesting curriculum reform movements of the 20th century. Far too little is known about it and its application for oppressed peoples. I believe social reconstructionism could be an interesting building block in the crafting of liberatory theory now being undertaken in curriculum reform. This short-lived movement showed great potential to speak truth to power.

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CHAPTER 3

THE CHANGING FACES OF EDUCATION FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS AFTER *BROWN*

Equity, Excellence, Choice, Vouchers, and Privatization

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To understand public education in the United States of America one must first understand the roles of the 50 states and their educational systems. The states must be viewed as 50 separate countries when assessing the status of public education, which is unlike other countries, except for Canada. The U.S. Constitution leaves the role of public education to the individual states and so you have 50 state educational systems with varying degrees of educational services for their citizens. And, within these 50 states, you have varying degrees of educational quality. Children in poor states on average receive poor education, as reflected in their academic test scores, compared to children in wealthy states; and within individual states, residents of rich districts offer superior education for their children compared to children in poorer districts.

Surmounting All Odds, pages 51–78
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The federal government gets involved in public education by passing and enforcing legislation to protect the legal rights of schoolchildren under the federal constitution. These measures protect parents and students against discrimination based on race, gender, disability, religion, or national origin. But the degree to which these rights are enforced depends upon the philosophy of the political party in power and/or the ideological composition of the U.S. Supreme Court. For example, federal courts in the recent past enforced a modest amount of racial desegregation of public schools by restricting the choice of parents who do not wish for their children to attend schools outside of their neighborhoods. But the current U.S. Supreme Court has stopped enforcing the 1954 *Brown* decision requiring the racial desegregation of public schools. Likewise, the use of public funds to support educational services in religious schools at this level is a violation of the federal constitution; however, recent Supreme Court decisions have weakened that standard by allowing public funds to be used to pay for books, transportation, and other related services in K–12 religious schools.

This chapter addresses issues central to school choice issues in public education after the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown* making de jure racial segregation of public education unconstitutional. School choice experiments include freedom of choice enrollment options, vouchers, magnet schools, charter schools, and the privatization of educational services. I review the impact of race on efforts to implement school choice options in K–12 public education and efforts to the use of public funds to educate children in private, not-for-profit schools. Currently, there are no for-profit schools operating in America, which should not confused with the private management of public schools by for-profit companies.

There are also other labels related to school choice/privatization issues such as family choice, charter schools, vouchers, opportunity scholarships, magnet or public school academies, "break-the-mold" schools, "new schools," "reconstituted schools," deregulation, private money for public schools, and tuition tax credits. However, before examining the politics of vouchers, school choice, and privatization, I will discuss implementation, deregulation, and other school choice experiments.

Educational reform is often a metaphor for several agendas: political, economical, racial, and educational. At first glance, these agendas should be obvious to the casual observer, but due to the complexity of issues involving privatization, its goals are muddled. Other common metaphors are family values, family choice, deregulation, and democratic values. However, one thing is certain, low academic productivity in public education is associated with poorly funded schools in poor communities; and most poor-performing schools are located in urban communities where most students come from racial and ethnic minority households. These residents possess less economic and political power than those who live outside of these communities. Many reformers proposing radical solutions to the problems of urban schools affecting Black children are political enemies of residents in these communities. Yet privatization has its own set of problems, academic and accountability (Archer, 2000a, 2000b; Bowman, 2000a, 2000b).

Education as "political market" exists in an environment where some players have more power than others (Brown, 1991; Scribner, Reyes, & Fusarelli, 1995). Political goals, not educational goals, will determine which educational reforms are implemented and supported (Brown, 1991). In the politics of education the key players are school board members, business leaders, school district employees, parents, students, and state legislatures (Flam & Keane, 1997). I review the implementation of privatization, deregulation, and other school choice experiments affecting the education of African American children.

Privatization of public elementary and secondary schools is designed to improve education by injecting market incentives into the system. In America, there are several markets operating simultaneously and in order of priority and there are political, ideological, economic, and educational markets. Politics "trumps" all other markets as it defines economic, educational, and other markets. In reality, educational reform is often a metaphor for political, economical, and educational agendas. At first glance, these agendas should be obvious to the casual observer of education. However, due to the complexity and confluence of issues involved, the goals of privatization in education become muddled. Other common metaphors for privatization of education are family choice, deregulation, and democratic values. Even so, the one thing that is clear about low academic productivity in America's public schools is that most poorly educated children are located in poor neighborhoods and communities. Furthermore, the majority of poorly performing schools are located in urban communities where most students come from racial and ethnic minority households. These residents possess less economical and political power than those who live outside of these communities. Yet many educational reformers proposing radical solutions to the problems of urban schools are traditionally the opponents, if not the enemies, of residents in these communities.

RACE AND CHOICE

It is important to note that race plays a critical role in determining who gets to choose the type and kind of education they wish to receive from the public schools. The school choice movement began in America with the consideration of race and social class of students. Generally, White Americans desire for their children to attend school with other White students but will accept a minimum level of minority involvement. Coons and Sugarman (1978), two University of California at Berkeley Law School professors and developers of California's voucher initiatives inform us that White Americans nationwide are so opposed to school desegregation that they will find multiple ways to avoid racially integrated schools almost at any cost and vouchers are the best option left for African Americans to improve their educational opportunities in this society.

The school choice and privatization movement (maintenance of racially segregated public schools via de facto means) began with the 1954 *Brown* decision, which declared racially segregated schools unconstitutional. First, after the *Brown* decision many White parents in the Southern states removed their children from the public schools and enrolled them in racially segregated schools citing parental choice as their rationale. Using "school choice" as a rationale for maintaining racially segregated schools, White parents sought public vouchers and tuition tax credits to fund their segregated schools, commonly called "Christian academies," to escape sending their children to an integrated school (Levin, 1999).

Politicians seeking support from this White constituency promised public-funded vouchers to send their children to racially segregated schools; supported racially segregated neighborhood schools, "magnet" schools within the public schools that enhanced racial separation of students; and eliminated the use of public funds to transport children for the purpose of racially desegregating public schools. Congress made it illegal to use federal funds for the purpose of racially desegregating public schools unless the school district was under court orders to desegregate its schools; and the State of Colorado enacted a similar statute restricting the use of state funds for school desegregation. Later these same anti-school desegregation forces supported the "market" forces and the private management of public schools as an alternative to the racial integration of public schools by focusing on educational excellence instead of equity.

In America it is assumed that everyone has an equal chance to achieve a good life based upon his/her natural talents or the lack thereof. If you fail to achieve the good life it is your fault and not the fault of the poor educational system you attended. Those who believe that as a community we should live like a family and share resources are in the minority. But, most citizens who have the economic or political resources to make either of these schemes work are generally opposed to a redistribution of educational opportunities for children of the poor of which a disproportion are African American.

Privatization of public education will keep racial and economic groups in their respective neighborhood schools. But supporters recommend changes by altering the leadership from public school administrators to privately hired administrators; it is also believed that this change in leadership alone will improve services for students. The first goal is more important to the supporters of privatization than the second goal. Privatization of public education is designed to satisfy political motives since there is no evidence that the scheme works. In America, there are several markets operating simultaneously: political, economic, racial, and educational markets. Politics "trumps" all markets. Politics defines markets and controls all other markets.

The 2000 U.S. Census reports that most White and Black children live in segregated neighborhoods and attend racially segregated schools (Schmitt, 2001), which is a significant increase over the 1990 Census (Schemo, 2001). Several big cities where most racial minorities reside are pushing to increase the percentage of White, middle-class residents, referred to as gentrification (Wilgoren, 2001). Racially segregated, neighborhood public schools are often promoted (indirectly) as an incentive to attract these gentrified residents. Changing demographics among White suburbanites are also fueling this movement back to the inner cities. These gentrified residents consist of families with few or no children and their long commutes to work in the inner cities make relocating more attractive if schooling opportunities for their children are changed (Scott, 2001). Lipsitz (2000) calls this "possessive investment in Whiteness" (p. 669), where Whiteness has value that includes the unequal education allocation to children of different races.

EXPERIMENTS WITH PRIVATIZATION AND VOUCHERS

The use of private, for-profit companies to manage public schools is active in America but is at a standstill (Mosle, 1997). In 1992, the Edison Project, a for-profit company, raised $100 million to establish and operate 25 schools, but still has not been able to make a profit. Edison, the nation's largest for-profit venture into public education, has yet to establish a for-profit school and now has shifted its focus to managing public schools for a fee or profit. The Edison Company was the first company in America to enter this business and operates 113 schools across the country, but many of these schools are charter schools with small enrollments of approximately 160 students per school compared to a regular public school with 400 to 700 for the elementary grades and 500 to 900 for the middle grades (Mosle, 1997). There are approximately 85,000 public elementary and secondary schools in America.

The use of public vouchers to attend private schools is legal in two school districts, the cities of Cleveland and Milwaukee, and the entire state of Florida. The Cleveland and Milwaukee voucher programs are designed for low-income students and the Florida program applies to students in all academically failing public schools.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the state established a voucher system initially for poor inner city children, where most were African Americans, accommodates 1.5% of the district's student population; and Cleveland, Ohio has a similar public voucher program for a small number of inner-city students. In 28 states, school districts are allowed to experiment with charter schools, autonomously operated public. Since Minnesota passed the first charter schools law in 1991, several states and the District of Columbia have statutes authorizing charter schools. About 700 charter schools out of 85,000 public schools are in operation nationwide and most are small and aimed at disadvantaged elementary and middle school students. Federal support rose from $51 million in 1995 to $85 million in 2000. In New York and several other large cities, public schools are being reconstituted or restructured to bring about increased academic improvement. Creating a few good schools has never been difficult with enough energy and motivation, but scaling up to improve all public schools in a district has proven difficult and impossible.

In 2000, the Cleveland program enrolled approximately 3,000 students for a total cost of about $12 million, of which $7.5 million go directly for vouchers and remainder for related costs of transportation. Most assistance went to students attending private schools or kindergarteners; only about 200 students from public schools received vouchers. The two independent, for-profit schools enroll most of the students from the public schools. Most parents used the vouchers to enroll their children in religious schools. White, suburban schools refused to participate in the voucher program.

In 1997, the Milwaukee voucher program paid up to $5,100 per student in 2000, $38 million for 4,200 students enrolled in religious schools and for 2,300 enrolled in private, nonreligious schools (Nelson, Drown, Muir, & Meter, 2001). In 2000, approximately 96% of the students receiving public vouchers in Cleveland attended religious schools. In 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a stay in a 5 to 4 decision, permitting the Cleveland voucher program to continue after a Federal District Court had issued a preliminary injunction to halt the use of vouchers to attend religious schools and before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit had a chance to hear the case. In 2001, the Bush administration asked the U.S. Supreme Court to rule on the case (Greenhouse, 2001). In September 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear arguments for and against the Cleveland voucher program. This request occurred after President Bush lost his fight in Congress for an educational voucher program (Rothstein, 2001). This action by the Bush administration also came after recent statewide voucher initiatives failed in California and Michigan.

Virginia Gilder decided to improve education at Giffen Memorial Elementary School in Albany, New York, the lowest performing school in the district, by providing $1 million to offer up to $2,000 to any Giffen student who wishes to attend a private school. About 105 students applied for the offer, but only 83 accepted to attend local Catholic schools. In San Antonio (Texas) Independent School District, a system of 61,000 students of whom 81% are Hispanic and 7% are White, the Children's Educational Opportunity Foundation provided scholarships that covered half of the tuition cost for low-income children to enroll in private schools, with a maximum of $750. This program was in operation from 1992 and evaluated for the first four years. A study of the program revealed that choosing parents were more educated and wealthier; the children applying for the program had higher standardized test scores; the students were more likely to be White; and the dropout rate was 50% due mainly to lack of transportation to the private school of choice.

Voucher supporters argue that they provide competition for students, innovation and diversity, competition for teachers, and a more flexible employment relationship, avoiding the dead hand of public school bureaucracies. Financial access is not an issue with public education, they argue, because public schooling is available to everyone. Therefore, privatization merely provides greater choice of school settings and hopefully quality. Opponents of vouchers argue that competition for students is not fair where all parents are not equally informed or interested, innovation and diversity is best served by the public schools, it will weaken the teaching profession, destroy the public schools, and return religion to the public schools.

Initially, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the state established a voucher system for students from low-income families, which may be used to attend private schools at the same per-pupil cost as attending public schools. The voucher program accommodates 1.5% of the district's student population in the Milwaukee state voucher program (Ascher, 1994; Cibulka, 1996; Molnar, 1996). About 1,500 students are given vouchers to attend the private school of their choice (Harvey, 2000). In Cleveland, recipients may attend a private school or a school in an adjoining public school system. A voucher is worth $3,600 per child in Milwaukee and $2,250 per child in Cleveland (Molnar, 1996; Walsh, 1996). Voucher proposals were defeated in Michigan, Oregon, Colorado, and California (Elam, Roser, & Gallop, 1994). In 1996, Milwaukee completed its fifth year without positive results (Molnar, 1996); the state withheld further examinations of the program until after 2000. Also in 1996, the Cleveland program is in its sixth year of operation without the participation of suburban school districts as allowed by the state statute.

To understand the impact of vouchers on students and school districts, we need to know the size of the voucher in dollar terms, who qualifies for a voucher, the financing of the voucher, the rules governing private schools that accept vouchers, and how individuals and private schools react to specific voucher policies (Goldhaber, 2001). We do know that given a choice in selecting schools for their children, most parents give the most weight to the demographics of the school's population their child attends, which generally results in greater segregation of students by race and social class (Goldhaber, 2001).

There have been few controlled experiments examining voucher programs, except for a few privately funded voucher programs in New York, Washington, DC, and Dayton, Ohio. These programs are small and targeted for low-income children in grades 2 through 8 (Goldhaber, 2001). The New York program offered 1,300 scholarships (up to $1,400 per year for up to 3 years). The Dayton voucher program provided 515 scholarships to children attending public schools and 250 scholarships to children already attending private schools (up to $1,200 for at least 4 years). The Washington, DC, program provides 1, 000 scholarships per year worth 60% of the tuition or $1,700, whichever is less, in the elementary grades and up to $2,200 for the high school grades. In each city researchers compared the treatment group and a control group for two years on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and found that voucher participants in New York and Washington were more satisfied with their schooling and only African American students showed higher academic achievement on the tests with their control group of African American students (Goldhaber, 2001). However, these studies did not control for important students' demographics and ability levels of the treatment and control groups.

The supply-side of voucher programs cannot be estimated due to the lack of enough private schools to accommodate a large shift of public school students to private schools. Also, we do not know what type of private schools will be established to meet such a shift. Second, will these private schools be more effective in attracting more high-quality teachers into the profession? School choice using public vouchers pay has the opposite effect on the teaching profession. Teachers are also concerned about good working conditions: adequate salaries, fringe benefits, and a quality work environment; and deregulation via voucher programs may not improve working conditions enough to attract top-quality teachers.

END GAME

Wisconsin State Democratic Representative Polly Williams of Milwaukee, an African American and the early national spokesperson for vouchers, recently admitted she "knew that once they [conservative White Republicans and the right-wing foundations] figured they didn't need me as a Black cover, they would take control of vouchers and use them for their own selfish interest" (Peterson & Miner, 2000, p. 819). Representative Williams also felt that the conservatives would remove the separation of church and state; remove the income cap set at $23,000 per year for a family of four; and the White city administration would use the voucher program to attract White people back into the city by promising that "you don't have to go to Milwaukee schools with Black children because we have opened a way for you" to send your children to school with other White children (Peterson & Miner, 2000, p. 821).

The conservative Bradley Foundation of Milwaukee funded much of that city's voucher efforts. The foundation also contributed $1 million to support Charles Murray's research in *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) a book that claims to document the inferior intellectual abilities of African Americans and pushed for school choice as the best strategy to help African Americans. The conservative right continues to attract individuals from fringe Black groups to support voucher initiatives using the promise the African American communities will be given money and control over the education of Black children (Wilgoren, 2000). But as Representative Polly Williams of Milwaukee discovered, her goal of pursuing a better education for poor Black children was less important in the bigger scheme: a return to racially segregated schools.

School choice options promoted to improve education for African American children in urban communities lack evidence that these options are superior to those offered by public schools. The promoters of school choice options give the impression to Black parents that simply have the option of choosing the school their children will attend will give them control of the education over of their children. The history of such programs is that there is a limited number of options because of geographical distance to some schools and the attractiveness of these schools for middle-class families and nonracial minorities, both with more political influence. Also, once parents leave their children at a private school, there is no evidence they will have control over what happens inside the school. These parents may have less of a voice or influence with private schools than with public schools as voters; and multiple private school options may not be available. It is true parents can exercise influence by withdrawing their child from a private school, but what are the options if they take this action, return to the public schools, or enroll in a private school of less quality (assuming that their first choice was of superior quality)? In the absence of more politically powerful consumers, vouchers may not purchase superior schooling for African Americans; and an expansion of vouchers to all income groups may further segment schooling by race, ethnicity, income, and ability (Sawhill & Smith, 2000).

In March 2000, an International Conference on School Choice and Educational Change met at Michigan State University in East Lansing to hear comments by scholars on the subject. The conference organizers concluded that the scholars could not agree that school choice and competition with public education would lead to improved academic outcomes for students; there will be increased democratic control of education; it will benefit the poor; and school choice is more a political issue than an educational matter (Kennedy, 2001).

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND PRIVATIZATION

Many states have authorized local school districts to grant parents or teachers the right to operate semi-autonomous public schools known as "charter" schools. In these states parents may organize a charter school, if they can recruit enough students to enroll, with public funds on the same per-pupil expenditure basis as other schools in the district. The parents may operate the school themselves or contract with a private company to manage the school for a fee. These private companies generally try to make a profit by reducing administrative cost. A private management company may contract directly with a local school district to manage their schools or contract to manage a charter school within the district controlled by the parents.

A charter school is a public school that operates outside of traditional local and state regulations. California charter schools may employ noncertified teachers and handle their own finances. In theory, charter schools foster competition since they may accept students from within or outside a single school district. To date, most charter schools are located in urban areas and operate in poor minority neighborhoods. But getting parents in the "better" parts of the district to enroll their children in a charter school in a poor neighborhood is not proving to be successful. It will take several more years to systematically evaluate the academic success of charter schools. However, several state accountability systems that mandate annual testing of students in charter schools should provide better data on their effectiveness.

In general, students in charter schools score below students in traditional public schools on standardized achievement tests, except for the few charter schools organized and operated by middle-class parents (Zermike, 2001). Recently, 86 charter schools have closed and some granted charters failed to open because of a lack of students, staff, or adequate facilities.

PRIVATE MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

Private management companies seek to manage traditional public schools and charter schools. However, some parents in New York City and San Francisco oppose their school district's proposal to allow the private companies to manage schools in their communities (Wyatt, 2001a, 2001b). The parents in New York City voted to oppose the use of a private company to manage the schools in their neighborhood.

Charter schools are likely candidates for management by private, for-profit companies. In 28 states, school districts are allowed to establish charter schools. Since Minnesota passed the first charter schools law in 1991, several states and the District of Columbia have statutes authorizing charter schools. About 2,150 charter schools out of 85,000 public schools nationwide are in operation. Most are small and aimed at disadvantaged elementary and middle school students. Federal support to aid with startup costs of charter schools rose from $5 million in 1995 to $51 million in 1997. Charter schools are public schools with administrative flexibility and may also opt to be managed by a private, for-profit company.

In addition to the two state-funded voucher programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland, there are private individuals and organizations providing vouchers. New York City, with the aid of private foundations, will support the attendance of 1,300 low-performing students from the public schools to attend Catholic schools in the city (Archer, 1997). The average tuition is between $1,700 and $1,800 per year. Educational Alternatives Inc. (EAI), a for-profit educational management company, wishes to use private money from private developers in Arizona to operate publicly funded schools in buildings constructed with private funds from housing developers (Schnaiberg, 1997).

Private individuals and foundations also fund vouchers for children enrolled in public schools to attend private schools. In 1997, a private citizen used vouchers to improve education at an Albany, New York, elementary school, the lowest performing school in the district. This individual set aside $1 million and offered up to $2,000 for any student who wishes to attend a private school (Dao, 1997). About 105 students applied and were accepted, but only 83 enrolled in a local Catholic school. For the San Antonio (Texas) Independent School District, a private foundation provided scholarships that covered half of the tuition cost, with a maximum of $750 for students from low-income families to enroll in private schools. This program was in operation from 1992 and was evaluated for the first four years (Godwin, Kemerer, & Martinez, 1997). The researchers found that choosing parents were more educated and wealthier; the children applying for the program had higher standardized test scores; the students were more likely to be White; and the dropout rate was 50% due mainly to not being able to get into the private school of choice. The 61,000-pupil San Antonio Independent School District population is 81% Hispanic and 7% White and other minority students.

Today, private companies manage about 200 public schools that enroll approximately 100,000 students (Addonizio, 2001). This is a small portion of the 53 million public school enrollment and financial success for these private management companies is rare. The Tesseract Group, Inc., which evolved from Education Alternatives, Inc., failed to get its school management contracts renewed in Dade County, Florida, Baltimore, Maryland, and Hartford, Connecticut, and recently sold two Arizona charter schools and a business college due to mounting financial losses (Addonizio, 2001). However, Nobel Learning Communities, Inc., of Media, Pennsylvania, bought the schools and now operates 151 small private and public charter schools in 16 states (Addonizio, 2001).

Some parents and teachers oppose the private management of charter schools. Wilkinsbury, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh, allows the for-profit company Alternative Public Schools of Nashville, Tennessee, to manage an elementary school. The teachers went to court to oppose this private management arrangement. A local judge ruled that the state charter school law gave local school districts the option of turning over failing public schools to private, not-for-profit companies only and they are not authorized to contract with for-profit companies to manage charter schools (Walsh, 1999). In Detroit, Michigan, city officials lost a lawsuit to oppose the private management of a Detroit charter school by another public school district located west of Detroit (Johnson, 1997). The charter school enrolls about 250 students. State lawmakers are debating whether another public school district can open a school inside another public school district. Michigan's Governor John Engler backed the move by another state school district system into Detroit to promote competition. In anger, the Detroit School Board voted against joining a partnership with the mayor and governor in reforming the city schools.

The private, for-profit Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc., is the largest provider of contract services for instructional programs to public schools. This New Jersey-based company provides supplemental instruction only: remedial and special education services funded by federal and state sources and tutorial services to students in wealthy public school districts. It has contracts in several states and is listed on the NASDAQ Stock Market (Kann, 1997).

POLITICS OF PRIVATIZATION

On the federal level, the Republican Party has shifted its school choice campaign to the tax code (Hoff, 1997). They seek tax-free savings accounts that could be spent on tuition at private and parochial schools. These accounts would allow parents, grandparents, and scholarship sponsors to deposit up to $2,000, free of federal income tax, into an A+ account. Withdrawals could go to independent private or parochial school tuition, or out-of-district public school tuition. Republicans also want a voucher program for students in the Washington, DC Public School District where Congress has control. Their proposed voucher program is similar to those in Milwaukee and Cleveland for children from poor families. Former President Bill Clinton threatened to veto the voucher proposal and it was withdrawn (Janofsky, 1997); and recently President George W. Bush withdrew his voucher proposal for the Washington, DC Public Schools due to a lack of support in Congress (Alvarez, 2001). The President was also aware of the fact that in 2000 voters in two large states, California and Michigan, defeated voucher initiatives in their states by large margins. Also, there are no private schools in the District of Columbia area that will enroll students for the $2,000 included in the 1997 Voucher Bill (Loose & Strauss, 1997) or the slightly larger amount in the 2001 U.S. Department of Education Budget (Alvarez, 2001).

Private companies have been employed to manage an entire school district. The Minneapolis School District hired a private company to serve as superintendent under a performance contract for four years. At the end of the 1997 school year, the Minneapolis School Board ended its contract with Public Strategies Group Inc., a private company hired to manage their public schools after four years (Hutchinson, 1997). The company made a claim of improving the school system according to its pay-for-performance contracts, but there is no confirmation of this claim. This private management company found that it takes a tremendous amount of energy to change schools and too much of what passes for change in education is nothing more than moving things around in hope that things will get better for children.

What are the limits to the use of vouchers to educate children from low-income families? The two state statutes with vouchers allow these vouchers to be used in private schools or in another public school district. The cost of attending many private schools is beyond what a public voucher can purchase. But what about using these vouchers to attend schools in another public school district? Vouchers have strong support from wealthy individuals and business leaders, but at the same time wealthy school districts where these individuals live are opposed to children from poor school districts attending school in their districts (Finn, 1997). School districts outside of Milwaukee and Cleveland are not required to participate in the voucher programs in these cities of mostly African American children from poor families by accepting students from these two cities. Wealthy public school districts do not participate in voucher programs and typically place a "bounty" on nonresidents who fraudulently enroll children in their schools. This situation poses a problem for voucher programs trying to enroll low-achieving students into high-achieving public schools. A Cleveland mother went to jail for enrolling her son in a wealthy, suburban school (Lewin, 1997). Illinois makes illegal school registration in another school district a misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 days in jail, a $500 fine, and tuition reimbursement.

Privatization implies that under capitalism, maximum output and efficiency by an organization can best be accomplished if there is an opportunity to make a profit; and we should encourage private vendors to enter public education with the profit motive in mind to increase productivity. The profit motive should be an advantage whether a school is operated with private funds or with state funds via a state voucher or a performance contract with a local public school system because it increases competition, and competition in education is good. But the history of "markets" in education has not always been positive (Richards et al., 1996).

America began schooling children privately administered not-for-profit schools and a few for-profit schools. As late as the 1920s three models coexisted: public schools, private nonprofit religious and private independent schools, and a few for-profit independent schools (Brown & Hunter, 1996). In the 1925 Oregon case *Society of Sisters vs. Pierce*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that parents could send their children to the school of their choice, overruling an Oregon statute that required all children to attend public schools only. A for-profit school and a nonprofit religious school were defendants in the case. Shortly after the 1925 decision, market conditions doomed private for-profit schools and they disappeared. Because of culture and tradition, for-profit schools no longer exist. Privately administered religious and independent schools are private, but nonprofit institutions. Several countries allow religious organizations to manage public schools but this practice is unconstitutional in America. Public-funded religious schools usually become de facto public schools. They behave like public schools and are generally required to operate under government regulations (Bishop, 2000).

The inability of private vendors to establish for-profit schools have led many entrepreneurs to contract with public school systems to manage public schools for a fee (profit). Educational Alternatives, Inc. (EAI) of Bloomington, Minnesota, was contracted to manage for a fee schools in Dade County, Florida, Baltimore, and Hartford, but the company has not been successful and lost its contracts to manage schools in these districts (Brown

& Hunter, 1996). However, another vendor, the Edison Project, is picking up the for-profit mantle by winning contracts to manage public schools (one in each of four school districts) with initial success in Wichita, Kansas; Boston, Massachusetts; Mount Clemens, Michigan; and Sherman, Texas (Applebome, 1996). The Hartford, Connecticut Public School District contracted with EAI to manage their entire district but cancelled the contract after one year. An EAI administrator, commenting on what went wrong with their efforts to operate the school system, stated that educational organizations are complex and extremely political (Baten, 1996). Contracting out for instructional services with private vendors requires the same administrative and political skills on the part of private managers as those exercised by a school superintendent to be successful (Brown & Hunter, 1996).

School system administrators, not parents, generally make the choice of contracting with a private vendor to manage a public school. Parents generally enroll their children in the same school, with the same teachers and schoolmates, regardless of who administers the school. Also, because of distance, money, peer pressure, and parental knowledge, school choice for the urban poor is more limited than for those who have the means to leave the district, enroll their children in private schools, or secure special treatment for their children in public schools (Wilgoren, 2001). This inability of inner-city parents to choose quality schools for their children is central to a discussion of privatization because they involve children from poor urban communities with a high concentration of racial minorities (Brown, 1991; Brown & Contreras, 1991; Carnoy, 1995; Henry, 1996; Molnar, 1996).

Closely allied with the privatization is deregulation of educational markets (Brown & Contreras, 1991). Deregulation is a term used by individuals from the business community to support privatization of education. If the education market is deregulated, private, for-profit schools will compete with private, nonprofit schools and public schools to increase competition. Nevertheless, accountability standards must be met. Businesspeople get excited about the possibility of making a profit from the $340 billion spent annually on education (Applebome, 1996), of which about $30 billion go to companies that supply schools with services such as transportation, food, and supplies (Flam & Keane, 1997).

PRIVATIZATION AS POLITICAL SYMBOLISM

The genesis of the modern privatization movement was put in motion by the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which declared state-supported school segregation, by race to be unconstitutional (Levin, 1999). *Brown* motivated school systems, first in the Southern schools and later in Northern schools, who were opposed to school desegregation experiments with school choice as opposition to the racial integration of public schools. The backlash against school integration increased after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Law, which gave the U.S. Justice Department the authority and resources to process through the federal courts compliance with *Brown* by offending school systems. School desegregation in the South and race riots in urban centers in the North combined to give the Republican Party a powerful weapon to attract conservative voters using the rhetoric of school "choice." In 1968, Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon proposed his Southern strategy to win office. The Southern or racial strategy worked North and South. Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan repeated this strategy later and it worked, even though the Democratic Party enjoyed a two-to-one edge among registered voters. Reagan began his presidential campaign in the deep Southern state of Mississippi to reinforce his support for those offended by the racial integration of public schools. Reagan by this action indicated symbolically that the related voters supported federal tax-exempt credits for tuition to help families offset the cost of enrolling their children in segregated Christian academies; and recommend federal vouchers to support attendance at these private academies. In the North, tuition tax credits appealed to working-class families with children in religious schools. Most of these voters were Democrats who were now voting for Republican candidates. Democratic candidates refusing to use such overt "symbolism" of racism lost many national, state, and local elections. In 1994, conservative Republicans took control of Congress, most state legislatures, and governorships; and with these victories Republicans in Congress attempted to get their 30-year quest for government vouchers enacted in the District of Columbia, where the federal government has control of public education (Johnson, 1996). This proposal was defeated; and last June 2001 a similar proposal to experiment with voucher programs in three states by President George W. Bush was defeated in Congress (Alvarez, 2001).

SUMMARY

The privatization of public elementary and secondary education in the United States involves the use of "market" forces to improve education without additional financial or human resources. Currently, there are no for-profit schools in America but some public schools are managed by private companies. This may sound confusing at first because the general public calls the private management of public schools "privatization" of public schools. It merely means that private, for-profit companies are allowed to manage public elementary and secondary schools for a profit and accomplish this task with the same per-pupil expenditure as similar publicly managed schools.

The process of contracting with local public school districts by private companies to manage their schools is now practiced in a small number of schools. Generally, local school districts decide which failing schools they wish to be managed by someone other than district administrators and therefore sign a contract with a management company without consulting the parents of the children in the schools. This year parents in San Francisco and New York City have asked to be consulted in this decision-making process.

I expect the school choice movement in public schools to decline or disappear from the American scene within a decade due to:

1. The realization that without additional resources, changes in school administration alone will not improve failing schools.
2. The profits that can be made from managing schools are not enough to entice more private companies into the field.
3. Schools that are successful will continue to use public school administrators to manage their schools, thus limiting the market of available schools for private companies.
4. Parents of children in failing schools will increase in their opposition to private management of their children's schools.
5. Elected public schools officials will continue to be guarded in their acceptance of the "privatization" of public schools, less they are voted out of office.
6. Teachers' unions will continue to oppose this process.
7. Wealthy school districts have not found a need to use private companies to manage their schools or get involved with voucher programs.
8. The major incentive behind the school choice movement was the opposition of White parents to the court-ordered school desegregation factor in school assignment, which has ended, and no longer a major factor in drafting school district boundaries.

The desire for school choice, vouchers, or privatization should not be based solely upon benefits to students (Gintis, 1995). Politicians support what people want, not always what they need. Anything that has value is political and the politics of education precedes the art and science of education. Using vouchers or the private management of schools to educate the urban poor in any form is a risky enterprise (Walsh, 1995), and it is often a metaphor for other goals (Gerth & Labaton, 1995; Smith & Meirr, 1995). When the Southern strategy is complete, a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court Justices will be individuals with racially and socially conservative views. The current U.S. Supreme Court is expected to end court-ordered busing to racial desegregate public education. because it is no longer justified under the law. This action should decrease the demand for vouchers and privatization of public education.

Two law professors from the University of California at Berkeley, authors of two California voucher initiatives, do not believe that Americans will accept racial and social class school integration) and a voucher is the best option available for the urban poor to get a good education (Coons & Sugarman, 1978). They feel that "accountability embodies its standards in legal norms and public process, and both are politically derived" (Coons & Sugarman, 1978, p. 28); and "family choice (vouchers) would derive its controlling norm of behavior not from politics but from private preference." I believe they have sprung a trap for themselves when they insist that accountability and standards are politically derived but parental choice of a school is not. On the other hand, I agree with their conclusion that "while our national law forbids and sometimes prevents official segregation, it does not appear likely that affirmative integration will soon become either a constitutional norm or a social habit of two professors" (Coons & Sugarman, 1978, p. 40). They feel that vouchers may help minority children escape the negative effect of their schools' hidden curriculum, assignments into lower-ability tracks and special education, and allow all students to better express their culture and diversity. True, minorities can find a school that will allow for such treatment, but all "good" schools replicate traditional values and practices. Low-income children who use vouchers (as in Milwaukee or Cleveland) continue to attend schools with other low-income students in minimally funded schools. Vouchers and privatization of public education will also add new layers of bureaucracy.

It appears that privatization of schools in the United States has more of a political motive than an educational motive. However, before one despairs about the future of inner-city children whose families lack the economic and political power to seriously impact the larger political system in America to improve schooling for their children, we should note that the world is changing. The expression that "the solution of one problem creates another problem" is in operation. Other changes are taking place that should replace the importance of education to the Southern strategy over time, a more racially and ethnically diverse population (Gross, 1997).

If we assess privatization from an educational perspective, the experiment is just beginning and we need more data over time before we can judge its success or failure. However, if we assess its impact on improving education for inner-city children, the experiment is a failure; most continue to be poorly educated. But, if we view school choice issues from a perspective, it is enjoying temporary success. Political candidates who use this symbolism as a political strategy are always favored to win elections. Big business and suburban voters feel that their taxes are paying for wasteful government programs for the poor favor vouchers and the privatization of urban schools. The major opponents of privatization are the two major teachers' unions. The unions receive lukewarm support for their position from former Democratic President Clinton and Democratic governors who must respect the politically successful Southern strategy. This is weak opposition compared to strong support for privatization by big business, several major private foundations, and the leadership of the Republican Party, the Christian Coalition, and scholars associated with well-funded conservative think tanks.

A major education problem in America was the lack of good schools for inner-city children. The twin solution to this problem, as viewed by conservatives, is to deregulate and privatize schools. Deregulation means parents are able to select a school from among public and private schools including the private management of public schools.

Even if Americans were not divided along racial and social class lines, politics would still play a significant role in the allocation of school resources for the simple reason education is the largest component of local and state budgets. Second, educational resources are not evenly distributed throughout the population. Inner-city schools are generally underfunded when compared to suburban schools. It is interesting why there are so many conservative politicians from wealthy neighborhoods fighting to help inner-city children with state-funded vouchers. Maybe because it is easier to get a program started for the poor and expanded later to help the rich.

The American experience is unique as a democracy with its highly diverse population. Perhaps, except for Canada, this country has the advantage as we move into the 21st century. More people from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds will relocate across national boundaries and the once majority will become a minority, which is due in America's immediate future. Therefore, America needs to develop all of its resources to compete economically in the new global economy and maintain political cohesion, as we become more diverse. All of our children need the opportunity to develop their talents to the fullest, but we need proof that

Again, we will have to await the education success of the several choice options discussed for more long-term evaluations before conclusions may be drawn. A confluence of other social and economic issues may help determine the success or failure of privatization. On the political side, politicians who support these efforts won more votes than their opponents. Most choice programs are aimed at inner-city children. Wealthy communities have been content to watch the privatization movement with neutrality; and with the rich on the sidelines it is difficult to predict the long-term future of the movement. Polls reveal that most Americans oppose government tuition vouchers for parents to send their children to independent private or religious schools (Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997). On vouchers, the public is evenly divided. This is not a new finding and politics do not always follow public opinion. Experiments with experiments will have to produce dramatic results for inner-city children to change the direction of public opinion about vouchers, charter schools, and the private management of public schools. School districts that are contracting out for instructional services must provide administrators with the training necessary to enter into agreement that will benefit children and meet the public's demand for fiscal accountability (Flam & Keane, 1997; Richards et al., 1996).

I see privatization of education coming to a halt within a decade and the country refocusing on accountability measures, which will lead to greater equality of funding for children enrolled in educationally disadvantaged schools. Choice and privatization plans as designed separate school children by race and social class. But in the near future the minority population will become the majority and should bring changes in the education system. Given the winner-take-all format of national presidential elections in the United States, it will be difficult for a candidate to win with a Southern strategy within a few years and continue to promote choice plans that separate children by race and social classes.

Wealthy parents continue to have choice options for educating their children that less wealthy parents do not have. Parents may move to a wealthy community with top-quality public schools, enroll their children in elite private schools, or home-school their children. The first option is preferred because wealthy parents can enroll their children in schools with children from other wealthy families and deduct these property taxes from their state and federal income takes, which is not available under other options. The poor can only demand improvements in the public schools; and it is unlikely the states will provide parents with enough money to enroll their children in an elite public or private school.

The results of America's experiments with market-like mechanisms in education are similar to the results experienced by those in England where researchers found no overall advantages from the British experiments with market-like conditions in education (Finkelstein & Grubb, 2000). The improvements in England were small and limited to a few well-placed choosers. Based upon the British experience it would be unwise to use market-based mechanisms that work best with high-quality choosers and high-quality suppliers (Finkelstein & Grubb, 2000). School choosers exist in a social context, in which self-determination is constrained by one's race and social economic class in America (Moses, 2001).

In the American context racial and economic justice in education will be advanced or impeded by other conditions (Levin, 1999). Almost two decades after the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown* to racially desegregate the public schools in the South, White parents used a variety of choice education schemes that kept the schools racially segregated. When these choice schemes were struck down by the courts, some states closed public schools and subsidized private school attendance for Whites who attended segregated academies/schools and withdrew public support from segregated public schools attended by minority children, labeling them as inferior. At the national level, this policy was adopted by Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan and became known as the "southern strategy," in which they criticized school desegregation plans and endorsed school choice. By 1986, only 3% of White children were enrolled in 25 of the largest city school systems in the country; and most were enrolled mainly with other White children in gifted and talented within-school programs (Levin, 1999). In America, vouchers and privatization have more to do with racial politics than education. In short, many White parents want choice as a means of schooling their children with other White children; and African Americans want choice because they feel that the federal courts and Congress has no intention of implementing a school integration plan. Therefore, as a practical matter they should take the money (vouchers) and educate their own children. Schools also serve as a source of employment for communities, Blacks remember losing public school jobs in the after-attempts at school integration, and the schools remained segregated and underfunded (Levin, 1999). In America parents select schools based more upon the racial and social economic composition of the student body and schools are rated good or poor by parents based upon these characteristics. White parents want their children in schools with White students and minority parents want their children in schools with a few minority students.

Of course, parents and their children are not the only constituents of public schools; teachers are also major players in the school choice movement (Buss, 1999). In general, teachers through their unions and associations oppose school choice options unless it's within the public school system.

School choice via privatization of education is supposed to improve the quality of education and provide more freedom by parents and teachers to design programs to meet the distinctive needs of children, but there is little evidence that this condition will occur (Kemerer, 1999). In general, legislatures like to legislate and administrative agencies like to regulate and there is little evidence that they will exempt privately administered schools from state's accountability and competition for public funds (Kemerer, 1999).

Nonprofit organizations are better for providing services such as education, religion, and health care where supplier performance is difficult to monitor but consumer trust is important and In public education market incentives are measured by "walking with your feet" (Bradford, 2000).

Nonprofit firms are more difficult to model than for-profit firms (Bradford, 2000).

Market conditions operate in school choice programs from the beginning and decline the longer the student is enrolled in the school (House, 1998). After first enrolling children in a school of choice, most parents find it difficult to shop for another school as if they are choosing a shopping mall because they have developed a heavy investment in the school. Experience with school choice reveals that after the first year most students get their first choice because they select the same school as their first choice. Thus, market conditions only operate in making the first choice; the mechanism of withdrawal and competition does not work as promoted by market advocates (House, 1998). Educational suppliers are limited to the number of children living in a specific community due to the fact that public funds are finite and limited based upon enrollment; and once parents with more information and resources make their choices, it limits the choices of other households. This is not the market model that comes to mind when we shop for food and other household goods; and these market conditions are not available to the urban poor where suppliers are few.

In America, many markets do not seek consumers from among the poor and education markets follow this trend. High-quality education suppliers have not fought to take advantage of public education vouchers that serve poor minority children in Milwaukee and Cleveland. Generally these poor children are not welcome in high-quality private or public schools in wealthy communities. Unlike other markets, where it is considered good judgment on the part of a poor consumer to purchase a low-cost item but it is not acceptable for a poor person to purchase a low-cost (poor) education for their child just because he or she is poor since school attendance is required by law. Public education does not respond to true market conditions. Education as a market lowers its quality based on state funding levels, not consumer demands (assuming all parents want the best for their children) by employing less-qualified teachers, a higher student/teacher ratio, and fewer support services. The motive for vouchers and privatizing public education in America is declining and will probably soon disappear as evidenced by minimum participation in the voucher program by poor African American children in Milwaukee and Cleveland. The voucher program sponsored by President George W. Bush was rejected by the U.S. Senate (Alvarez, 2001).

One lesson from *Brown* is that most efforts to secure equality in this country sooner or later run into a form of de facto segregation that no American court is likely to strike down: segregation by wealth. Racial discrimination became a bigger factor than segregation and is much more subtle and difficult to detect and fight. The Supreme Court in the 1970s drew the line at requiring school districts to be equally funded and at obliging states to pursue desegregation by busing students between cities and suburbs. Those cases (*San Antonio v. Rodriguez* and *Milliken v. Bradley*) mark the end of the *Brown* era (Menand, 2001). The federal court put the final summation on court-ordered racial school desegregation in September 2001 when the full United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in a 7–4 vote ruled that no racial segregation remained in the 105,000-pupil school system of the North Carolina Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District and ordered an end to race-based busing and student assignments no later than the 2002–2003 school year. The full court reversed a November 2000 three-judge panel that overturned a lower court decision to end court ordered desegregation that began with the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court decision to allow the use of busing to implement school desegregation ("End to Busing," 2001).

Today, segregation has increased in most large suburban areas, from Milwaukee to New York City; and that shift includes a move from primarily White to non-White residents (Blair, 2001). This pattern occurred in a community that planned a racially homogenous community and school in Celebration, Florida, by the Walt Disney Company (Blair, 2001). The school is 88% White in a county that is 59% White. The trend is toward racial balkanization. One African American from this Florida county expressed a point of view that goes unstated but is felt by many African Americans when he stated that "I would not want to live here. They are not comfortable with us and I am not comfortable with them" (Blair, 2001, p. A21). In 2001, African Americans are less motivated to fight to live in White communities where they are not welcome. Most demographers feel that housing discrimination is so subtle and forceful that even with the best intentions the decade-old national trend toward suburban segregation would be difficult. Robert Tennebaum, who developed an integrated community in Columbia, Maryland in the 1960s, feels that it would be difficult to duplicate such a community today (Blair, 2001).

If the trend toward racially segregated communities (as the data indicate) and the end of federal court-ordered school desegregation, African Americans will see less discrimination in single-race schools, academic tracking via ability grouping, magnet schools, year round schools, and few Black teachers and administrators; excessive placement in special education classes; more involvement of Black students in student government; and greater involvement of Black parents in school affairs. This coming situation may bring a return to demands for community control of schools that first surfaced in the 1960s when communities resisted school desegregation in multiracial towns and cities, but with racially identifiable neighborhoods. De jure racial segregation that was addressed in *Brown* will yield to de facto segregation that existed and continues to exist across all regions of the country. Now that the *Brown* decision to racially integrate public education is over and communities become more segregated by race, it is anticipated that the White majority will cease to have further interests in vouchers, privatization, and other school choice mechanisms designed to racially separate students in public schools, as envisioned sponsors of vouchers or "family choice" in education (Coons & Sugarman, 1978). It is not possible at this time to predict exactly how these events will play themselves out in the future, but the direction is clear; less demand by the majority for vouchers, more one-race schools, and less in-school discrimination. The Court has agreed to rule on the Cleveland voucher program and should render its decision on the case by June 2002. I expect the Court to ask the state of Ohio (and by inference other states) to justify the state's fundamental interest in the use of the program in religious school as the best alternative for achieving such ends and that the program must be narrowly tailored to meet the Court's guidelines for the state's involvement with religious institutions laid down in *Lemon v. Kurtzman,* 403 U.S. 602 (1971).

However, there will be other issues to review after these changes. Will the public schools lose their capacity to make the "melting pot" idea more of a reality with more racially segregated neighborhoods and schools? How will the teacher supply market respond to working in these new African American de facto segregated schools with greater input or control? We will have to wait for the answers. Another point that will require future analysis but is not a part of this chapter is the push for the principle of "neutrality" of the laws regarding race, a legal principle that gives the advantage to the majority group with the power to make most important public policy and employment decisions.

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CHAPTER 4

LANGUAGE, RACE, AND SCHOOLING

A Conceptual and Historical Legacy of Educational Language Policies and Politics Affecting the Ethnolinguistic Minority Child of African Descent[1]

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> *The heart of the matter…is that language has been a central medium of cultural hegemony in the United States. Class stratification and cultural assumptions about language converge in schooling to reproduce the social order. A latent function of the educational system is to instill linguistic insecurity, to discriminate linguistically, to channel children in ways that have an integral linguistic component, while appearing open and fair to all. (Hymes, 1983)*

THE PROBLEM OF THE LANGUAGE LINE

Sociopolitical trends and demographic realities at the turn of the new millennium suggest that the problems of linguistic discrimination and ine-

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quality are becoming central to schooling and our larger society. When in a historical perspective language, race, and schooling are juxtaposed in analyzing the educational conditions of African Americans, "the problem of the language line" represents a major area of concern for educational and language scholars who look to improve the life chances of African American youngsters. This problem of the language line, or the relation of the varieties (dialects) of and languages other than English by men in Asia, Africa, and in America and the islands of the sea represents to the 21st century what "the problem of the color line,—relation to the darker to lighter races of men…" (Du Bois, 1969, p. 55) represented to the 20th century. In much the same way that William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois contemplated the peculiar racial and cultural dichotomy for which confronted the American Negro at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, this sense of twoness—being an American and being a Negro, a similar duality today manifests for the ethnolinguistic minority child of African descent who too must consider the duality of language in the shaping of his identity and reality in the United States.

The demographic context of ethnolinguistic diversity is very often camouflaged beneath other impending aspects of diversity in the United States. As a result, specific attention to critical perspectives on language policy and planning is usually neglected or not given adequate address. Consistent with other demographers, Hodgkinson (2000) predicts that by 2025 no racial or ethnic group will have a majority of public school students and the same is true for all Americans in 2050. Amidst the predominant White Anglo-Saxon population of our nation, there exists an expanding racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse population. School leaders, he believes, ought to consider and understand the global racial and ethnic shifts as they translate to young persons of school age in this country. Hodgkinson's answer to appropriate language policy relative to the shifting demographic realities in schools is the oft-suggested "need for some kind of bilingual education—some combination of instruction in the English language with content instruction in a language the student understands" (p. 6).

Given recent educational policy debates about language that relate to broader issues of race and cultural representation in the American social structure, general suggestions to include "some kind of" bilingual education constitute a necessary but insufficient means of addressing the issues that lie beneath the surface of the changing multicultural and multilingual reality of being American. As typical as Hodgkinson's suggestion is to addressing the multicultural and multilingual reality of our nation, his suggestions as to how to address language diversity often either do not include African Americans as a significant sector of the group characterized as language minorities (cf. Waggoner, 1988), or his educational language solutions are a long way from offering the necessary address of adequate educational reform and policy for African American children (Baugh, 1998; Morgan, 1999).

The consequences of language and race in the schooling of African American children as we enter the new millennium are complicated and complex, indicative of conflicts that emerge over the control of ideas and information in education and society at large (Spring, 1998), and the historical and social context of struggles between groups along both ethnolinguistic and class lines (Wiley, 1999). Surrounding recent educational language politics in this country, in light of debates of English Only/Official English, (anti)bilingual education, and Ebonics, there exist dominant ideologies that shape American schooling and a host of hegemonic myths prevalent in the schooling of ethnolinguistic minority children, and specifically those of African descent (Hopson et al., 1998; Macedo, 2000; Ortega, 1999). With the exception of the Ebonics controversy in the winter of 1996/1997, which directly addressed ethnolinguistic learners of African descent, it is more common for discussion about language politics, policy, and planning not to include African American populations or learners. Of course, this does not imply that ethnolinguistic learners of African descent are not affected indirectly or implicitly.

That there exist a number of similarities in the experiences of language minority groups in the United States is evident in terms of the impact of the imposition of official English policies and restrictionism on the use of their own languages (Wiley, 1999); however, significant differences exist between language minority groups. For example, Kloss's (1998) systematic and encyclopedic historical analysis of language policy and planning focused on European immigrant language minorities. His analysis developed a framework for classifying them in terms of immigrant language rights. Kloss's seminal work, while invaluable to the foundational study of language policy and politics in the United States, is quiet, however, on the experiences of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, or Africa as well as instances of language, cultural, and racial discrimination that impacted indigenous or colonized peoples (Wiley, 1999). Kloss's and others' omission of the impact of formal language policies on peoples of African origin in the United States presents itself as an opportunity to use the legacy of educational language policies and politics on this population over the last century to frame potential research in the field.

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS TOPIC

> Socialization for many Black Americans is a process during which an individual, while acquiring his culture, is also enculturated to its disadvantaged and negatively valued status as defined by the wider culture of which he is also a part.... The bicultural status of Black Americans makes the socialization process a time when each individual attempts to find some viable personal reconciliation to cultural patterns, values, and attitudes that do not cohere or intersect in any consistent fashion.... Language is an important reflector of these positions. (Mitchell-Kernan, 1972, p. 209)

The sense of twoness—being an American and a Negro—that Du Bois (1969) so aptly portrayed is uniquely reflected in language. That is, the linguistic duality of being African American is at the forefront of struggle for democracy, identity, power, and social and cultural reproduction both in education and in the larger American social structure. When Du Bois spoke of "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in an amused contempt and pity" (p. 45), it is quite clear that Du Bois referred to a cultural double standard where Americans of African descent would need to juggle the realities of their own background and identity with those projected by a more dominant one. Attention to this "linguistic push–pull" reality is inevitable in the discussion of the theme of this chapter (Hopson, 1997; Smitherman, 1977), as it describes the peculiar socialization that occurs among African American learners in schooling.

Of course, the problem of the language line is not limited to African American people and youngsters, yet for the purposes of this chapter, the primary focus will rest on learners of African descent. The linguistic duality of being African as well as American is represented in unique cultural ways of knowing, learning, and ways of speaking, which characterize African American student life, achievement, and cultural identity. In schooling, one can observe an intersection of conceptual underpinnings, colonial and hegemonic in nature, which pervade the mental experience of the ethnolinguistic minority African American child.

This chapter reflects on not only these theories but a host of historical, educational language politics and policies that envelop the learner of African descent who seeks to resolve the dilemma of linguistic "twoness" in schooling and in the larger society. In giving attention to Du Boisian analysis and critique of the problem of the language line, particularly for the ethnolinguistic minority child of African descent, this chapter implies an additional characteristic that contributes to African American twoness, namely the factor of dialects.

For purposes of showing how this conceptual framework operates in schooling, this chapter takes the position that cultural and linguistic hegemony is not limited to an analysis restricted to the United States and its treatment of African Americans. Much of the literature that informs this framework presupposes a larger and broader treatment of cultural politics of English in the world (Fanon, 1967; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1988, 1992), all the while addressing the particular historical dynamics of language and race in the schooling of children of African descent in America (Baugh, 1999; Smitherman, 2000; Stanfield, 1995). In this manner, this chapter has implications beyond Americans of African descent. It also attempts to link their concerns globally with hopes of identifying cross-group patterns relative to language policy and planning where colonized and involuntary immigrant groups are concerned.

Layout

This chapter is divided into two more sections. Following this section, a conceptual framework discusses the problem of the language line by revisiting cultural and linguistic hegemony in schooling for ethnolinguistic minority children of African descent. The conceptual framework, in defining cultural and linguistic hegemony, weaves a number of interdisciplinary theories that prevail in schooling. These include the role of language in the cultural deficit model, the effects of linguistic and cultural duality, and language in the context of colonialism.

The second and final section summarizes notable sociohistorical and political perspectives (issues, laws, and decisions) that have faced ethnolinguistic minority students for most of the 20th century. Some of these include the cases at the federal and district levels such as *Lau v. Nichols, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School v. Ann Arbor School Board, Larry P. v. Riles,* and the recent Ebonics resolution in Oakland, California. This analysis is different from the type of linguistic analysis of morphosyntactic elements; it discusses broader forces that have contributed to the linguistic twoness of African Americans in schooling and society. In detailing the essential facts pertaining to the problem of the language line for the ethnolinguistic minority child of African descent, this chapter contributes to developing work that discusses the importance of language educational reform and equity in the United States.

FRAMING HEGEMONY, COLONIALISM, AND DARWINISM AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LEARNER

> After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of other world. (Du Bois, 1969, p. 45)

This chapter revisits the problem of language and race in the schooling of African American children by situating cultural and linguistic hegemony in schooling. For matters of this chapter, cultural and linguistic hegemony are mutually exclusive, but interrelated concepts. This chapter takes a similar conceptual position to that articulated by Dell Hymes at the onset of the chapter. In the United States, as in other nation-states in the world, the predominance of culture, namely language, provides a revealing perspective when one considers how language is used as an instrument to reproduce relationships, frame and win alternatives, and legitimize correctness. There is nothing new about the fact that language exists as more than a medium of communication. What is new is the manner in which its use and proliferation as an instrument has emerged at the threshold of educational politics and policies in this country in the last two decades.

Language and Hegemony

Hegemony, as defined by the late Italian journalist and revolutionary Antonio Gramsci (1971), is understood as a process or procedure whereby dominant groups legitimize and reward their way of seeing the world, describe human nature, and manifest relationships (Williams, 1981). Gramsci extended the notion of hegemony in a couple of ways. First, he suggested that hegemony be widened to apply to the relationship between social classes and groups, and not just understood in contexts where nations would exercise social, political, and economic influence over another (Entwistle, 1979). Most significantly, ruling groups and classes exert and reproduce dominance not only by framing winning situations and perspectives, but by doing this in natural, normal, and beneficial ways over subordinate groups (Apple, 1996; Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, & Roberts, 1975). Gramscian thought furthermore directly finds schools playing as instruments of hegemony; specifically by critically evaluating the role and quality of teachers and the larger structure and organization of the school (Entwistle, 1979).

Linguistic hegemony refers to "the privileging of one language as the only legitimate language of governance" (Williams, 1998, p. 11), or the procedure where "languages achieve the status of dominant or dominated or prestigious or inferior, as a result of the struggles, negotiations, and impasses that go on between their speakers" (Shannon, 1995, p. 177). The spread of English as neutral, natural, and beneficial are direct applications of linguistic hegemony, extending beyond the borders of this country. On this topic, quite a lot has been written about the linguistic imperialism and larger cultural politics of English in Asia and Africa, though it is possible to widen linguistic hegemony in a U.S. context.

Phillipson's work (1988, 1996) highlights linguistic imperialism in his critique of English Language Teaching (ELT) methods used to both promote English and maintain the structure of the world order. His critique of linguicism, "similar in its workings and effects to racism, classism, ageism, and similar structures and ideologies which serve to maintain inequality" (1988, p. 339), is depicted in the manner in which colonialism and neocolonialism have manifested historically, initially through the agency of American and British missionaries in Africa, and more recently by English language promotion in former colonies. Pennycock (1994) paints a larger picture of the cultural politics of English, extending the discussion of linguistic hegemony to its broader sociopolitical effects. His argument speaks to observing the juxtaposition of language in global nation-states—those that threaten as well as those that are threatened—and how "official" status of languages provides a means for the inaccessibility and subordination of certain groups and peoples.

Shannon (1999) points out further how the hegemony of English in the United States is evident from her research of bilingualism and language rights in Spanish-speaking communities. Noting the significance of a new plan for the education of language minority students in Denver, Colorado, which minimized the role of native language instruction while emphasizing the supremacy of English, Shannon contends:

> The hegemony of English in the United States allows this school district and others around the country to act with impunity, while ignoring language rights and determining that immigrants do not deserve language privileges. In California, Proposition 227 won the majority of votes, in part, because of its appeal to the public conscience and common sense. What could possibly be wrong with an amendment entitled "English for the Children"? (pp. 23–24)

In her view, the plan by the Denver Public Schools like the English-only legislation movements appeal not only to common sense, but also to alleged notions of social and political unity and the growth of the economy (Shannon, 2000).

The Negro, this seventh son, is, however, not immune from the dynamics of linguistic and cultural hegemony in the schooling arena of the United States. Fordham (1996) shows how the African American population in Washington, DC, has historically struggled to overcome the consequences of dominant images of race and identity. Throughout phases of African American history—enslavement, the First Emancipation following the Civil War, the Second Emancipation following the Civil Rights Movement, and neosegregation—Fordham describes how being Black was constructed during the First Emancipation as a stigma and burden, an identity "to be opposed through conformity to existing dominant norms and values" (p. 41). That these early cultural characterizations and representations had far-reaching implications for the current dilemmas that confront African Americans is quite apparent in school and in society. In the context of Washington, DC, she describes that

> the central dilemma confronting African-Americans in Washington is the coexistence of the valorizing of race and its deconstruction as a significant social and cultural category.... While African-Americans seek to become an Other by meeting or exceeding all existing expectations for success, they frequently discover that their efforts are thwarted and their ability to both imagine and dominate is hyphenated and fragmented.... That is, one's inability to transform the stigma attached to race becomes a consuming passion, making the individual more inclined to be what he or she needs to be in order to "pass [for white]" in a particular context. (p. 48)

Though Fordham's portrayal of this aspect of the social history of the African American population in Washington, DC is vital for understanding the successes and failures that confront African Americans in the school context and in the larger society, her work is only one of many that describe the consequences and realities of hegemony on learners of color in America.

Language and Colonialism

For colonized persons throughout the world, language plays a key role in either framing and maintaining or challenging and deconstructing dominant themes and ideologies that reproduce global social relations. In framing the colonial relationship and situation, Albert Memmi's (1965) discussion of the importance of language is central. He situates the colonized like a foreigner in his own country, whose own mother tongue has little or no value, due to the status accorded to the language of the colonizer. The colonized's mother tongue, according to Memmi,

> that which is sustained by his feelings, emotions and dreams, that in which his tenderness and wonder are expressed, thus that which holds the greatest

> emotional impact, is precisely the one which is the least valued. It has no stature in the country or in the concert of peoples. If he wants to obtain a job, make a place for himself, exist in the community and the world, he must first bow to the language of his masters. (p. 111)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's contribution to this theme focuses on the crucial role of language in social interaction and the transmission of sociocultural values. His primary targets at the time of his writing lay in creative and African literature, but his admonition has more universal applicability. When he wrote, "choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe" (1987, p. 4), he too was situating language use and choice beside larger social, political, and economic forces in Africa. The introduction of English to colonial Kenya brought with it more than the expectation that it should be used in formal education; it became "more than a language: it was *the* language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference" (p. 11), such that "English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts, the sciences, and all the other branches of learning. English became *the* main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education" (p. 12). Wa Thiong'o's intention here is to portray how, through colonialism, the imposition of a foreign European language was synonymous with a larger aim to achieve domination in "the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world" (p. 16). Deliberate suppression of native languages (written and spoken) would not only help to alienate the colonial child from her immediate environment, it would also serve the larger purpose of rewarding and sanctioning larger sociocultural norms, values, and behaviors. Through this colonial alienation, two disconnects are apparent: one is the privileging of a foreign language and culture at your own expense, the other, more detrimental disconnect involves the colonized divorcing themselves from qualities of their own language and culture that become framed as being underdeveloped and backward.

It is no surprise that in the context of postcolonial nation-states, language policy and politics play a vital role in either the decolonization or maintenance of suppressed and marginalized social groups. Neville Alexander's (2000) recent reflection of key language policies in southern Africa indicated this fact, suggesting that "the language question in postcolonial Africa and, therefore, in the countries of Southern Africa, is one of the defining questions of the 21st century" (p. 4). Not only was Alexander linking this language question with the struggle for liberation against the domination of global economic and political forces, but his comments also imply that the choices and decisions that surround language policy and planning ought not be thought about in isolation from social policy realities and explanations. The decisions around language policy, which he and others cite (Bokamba, 1995; Herbert, 1992; Macedo, 2000; Matsela, 1995; Putz, 1995), furthermore must be seen in the light of a historical reality of colonialism and/or apartheid. In the present context of southern Africa, Alexander posits that the perpetuation of colonial (and in some cases, cultural) attitudes that suggest indigenous languages are for use in less prestigious domains of family, church, and community is "the single greatest obstacle to the implementation of a consistently democratic policy on the language question in Africa" (p. 2).

In the United States, we would be remiss if we did not examine the legacy of colonialism that characterizes our imposition of educational and language policies on territories in order to further Americanization, and the more current attack on bilingual education by conservative and liberal educators (Macedo, 2000). The implementation of adequate and acceptable language policies in Puerto Rico, as Zentella explains, needs to be understood against the backdrop of the colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. This is characteristic of the intentions noted by Major General Nelson Miles in his proclamation after the invasion of Puerto Rico in July 1898 when he assured the people of the island that

> It is not our purpose to interfere with any existing laws and customs that are wholesome and beneficial to your people so long as they conform to the rules of military administration, or order and justice. This is not a war of devastation, but one to give to all within the control of its military and naval forces the advantages and blessings of enlightened civilization. (cited in Zentella, 1999, pp. 156–157)

It is this "enlightened civilization" that manifests colonial ideology and propels many who currently support the dismantling of bilingual education to view the acquisition of English as education itself, and measures the success of bilingual programs only in terms of success in English acquisition and proficiency. In making the connection between the position taken by proponents of U.S. English Only, the present polemics over Western heritage versus multiculturalism, and the views taken by European colonialists who attempted to eradicate the use and presence of African languages and cultures through the educational system, Macedo (2000) identifies the similarity of structures and mechanisms of colonial ideology.

Frantz Fanon's address of the Black man's liberation meant coming to terms with an inferiority complex, one that applies to the Negro of the Antilles as well as the Negro from Africa and America. The linguistic twoness that this "universal" Negro faces is, for this argument, one in the same. Reflecting this Du Boisian leitmotif, Fanon writes (1967): "The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the White man. A Negro behaves differently with a White man and with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question" (p. 17). A major element of deconstructing the wounded and colonized personality of the Negro, according to Fanon, would lie in the awakened attention to the role of language, and specifically in empowering people and their children to use and develop their own language and culture next to, not to the exclusion of, English and other ex-colonial languages and cultures (Alexander, 2000; Bartolome & Macedo, 1999).

Language and Race

The relationship between language and race contains, in Baugh's view (1999), "a biological and political dimension" (p. 7). The biological dimension is a linguistic and evolutionary fact: racial and ethnic groups have emerged as a result of genetic evolution. All languages (and races) are equal in the sense that no variety is more complex than another. Though the two perspectives—biological and sociopolitical—can be generally characterized in the intersection between language and race, it is this sociopolitical perspective that has commanded most attention from scholars who explore the importance of cultural, social, and political contexts and functions of language in everyday American life.

Any discussion of the convergence of language and race will necessarily confirm the primacy of race and the influences and ideologies that reinforce the problem of the language line for the child/learner of African descent in the United States. Stanfield (1995) shows that scientific explanation and social science reasoning have confirmed a thought and ideology about people of African descent throughout the 20th century. A major paradigm that articulated and justified notions of racial inferiority and superiority in America was Social Darwinism. Darwinist thought had considerable currency in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century (Hofstader, 1959), appealing to both the general public and the academic knowledge base alike. According to Stanfield, "the modernity value of Social Darwinism was apparent in its social and political flexibility as a cultural ideology for emerging industrial elites interested in establishing boundaries and hierarchies between themselves and the largely Jewish and Catholic southern and eastern European immigrants" (pp. 219–220). Stanfield's thesis contends that the widespread acceptance of thinking about darker races extended beyond European immigrants and the borders of the United States, contributing to the creation and institutionalization of the social production of racialized knowledge about various people of color in the human sciences. That, in advancing notions of Black inferiority, this racialized knowledge would explain language differences is without question.

The predominant view about the speech and language of people of African descent has been historically viewed as a deficient perspective, contributing to repeated notions of its illegitimacy, devaluation, and stigmatization. Smitherman (2000) writes how J.A. Harrison's first "scientific" study of African American speech operated from a model of cultural and linguistic deviance, one that influenced widespread thought about the childlike mentality and intellectual inferiority of Black peoples, when he wrote:

> The humor and naiveté of the Negro are features which must not be overlooked in gauging his intellectual caliber and timbre; much of his talk is baby-talk...the slang which is an ingrained part of his being as deep-dyed as his skin...the African, from the absence of books and teaching, had no principle of *analepsy* in his intellectual furnishing by which a word, once become obscure from a real or supposed loss of parts or meaning, can be repaired, amended, or restored to its original form...Negro speech organs are becoming slowly and with difficulty accustomed to the sound *th*.

Prevailing theories about cultural deficiency, particularly the theory that purports to explain that Black children's lack of educational achievement and development is due to their own genetic and cognitive characteristics, have had far-reaching implications in the framing of language and race of children of African descent (Bloom et al., 1965; Deutsch, 1964; Englemann, 1970; Jensen, 1969). Ignoring larger conditions of racial and class inequality, these theorists suggested that African American learners faced linguistic and cultural deprivation in their homes and general surrounding life. Their variety would be explained by social pathology theories, thus contributing to victim-blaming tendencies on the one hand, and conceptions about the inevitability and natural state of things on the other. Despite the contribution of noteworthy language scholars to the study of the system and structure of the language of African Americans (Baugh, 1983; Labov, 1972; Mitchell-Kernan, 1972; Smitherman, 1977), a tradition of linguistic Darwinism prevails throughout the nation.

One prevailing and detrimental assumption of the Ebonics controversy equated standard English to intelligence, thus exacerbating the plight of African American learners in public education who come to realize that the years of historical discrimination, while they were mastering "proper" English, did not guarantee entry to socioeconomic and academic success. In a recent study of the social meanings and cultural rules and use embedded in the dialects used by adults and children in a Black speech community, Ogbu (1999) points out that, despite the enhancement of status expected by the larger society for learning to speak the standard as well as general perceptions of White proper English equating with standard

English, this speech community housed strong beliefs opposing proper English. The "dialect dilemma" that Ogbu identifies stems from what he holds are:

> incompatible beliefs about proper English: a) They believe on the one hand that it is necessary to master it for education and job success, b) but they also believe that mastering proper English threatens their slang English identity, their *bonafide* membership in their community and racial solidarity; furthermore, mastering proper English for education and jobs is a requirement imposed on Black people by their White American oppressors. (p. 168)

Ogbu's work draws attention to the linguistic and cultural duality faced by African American children who attempt to succeed in school and the costs they endure in maintaining their own way of speaking as a symbol of collective oppositional identity and as a bundle of boundary-maintaining mechanisms. The price of talking proper and "acting White" has benefits for educational and job success, but carries with it clear disapproval by the larger Black speech community that sees the accommodation of proper English as pretending to be White and an obvious rejection of one's own color and identity.

Fordham captures this linguistic and cultural duality that African American students face in school—the phenomenon of becoming raceless—unlearning and modifying "their own sanctioned interactional and behavioral styles" in order to "adapt those styles rewarded in the school context if they wish to achieve academic success" (1988, p. 55). This reality of racelessness asserts the critical importance of race in the lives of Black Americans, which most often presents itself as a formidable obstacle rather than as an opportunity or virtue. It is through the practice of becoming raceless (i.e., through the conscious or unconscious rejection of the indigenous Black American culture, language, and other manifestations of identity) that Black students imagine they can circumvent stigmas attached to being Black in the effort to achieve success in the worlds of work and school. In Fordham's seminal study of high academic-achieving Black adolescents in school, the resistance of these students to identify strongly with the Black community not only parallels that of Black adults in the workforce, but the practice of racelessness is also used as a strategy to

> minimize the discomfort experienced by members of the dominant society who evaluate them as they enter institutions that are governed by dominant group norms and standards. If they are not successful in minimizing their ethnic group membership—that is, appearing raceless—their chances of achieving vertical mobility are seriously diminished, despite clear evidence of academic excellence on standardized measures of success. (p. 80)

Smitherman (1977) describes the sociohistoric dynamic and struggle that African Americans deal with in assimilating, and pushing toward attaining, White Americans' religion, culture, customs, and language while simultaneously pulling away from it and preserving their own African experience and the values characteristic of "push–pull." She specifically uses push–pull to signify this duality that African American and other ethnolinguistic minority populations face when attempting to acquire preferred varieties or English itself (in the non-native population situation) at the expense of their own (Hopson, 1997). To these learners, the dominant language and variety exists as a double-edged sword. This is the key to vertical mobility and symbol of American identity, but not the key to socioeconomic equality and equity on which it often is portrayed (Baron, 1997).

That the social division of dialects along racial lines is prevalent in the United States comes as little surprise to those familiar with the colonial and hegemonic legacies that surround African Americans. Though the biological dimension of languages presents a linguistic ideal of equality among all (languages) in social terms, languages and dialects become largely associated with the class status of those who use them. When we extend this framing further, Baugh's (1998) treatment of the intersection between language and race makes sense:

> Racism has a linguistic aspect…racists believe that their language (and most other aspects of their culture) is superior to those of the "inferior" races. Such an attitude, if supported by political domination, whether overt or covert, is used to justify attempts to impose doctrines on racially subordinate groups. Ironically, these policies are usually offered in the name of "improving" the plight of less fortunate people. (p. 8)

As we will see in the next section, the ethnolinguistic minority child of African descent has been directly and indirectly affected by educational language policies and politics over the last century, some under the guise of enrichment and progress.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF EDUCATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICIES AND POLITICS AFFECTING THE ETHNOLINGUISTIC MINORITY CHILD OF AFRICAN DESCENT

A legacy of linguistic and cultural hegemony suggests that the sociohistorical context of official English, bilingual education, and the Ebonics controversy may be better understood within interlinking perspectives of colonialism, cultural deficit theory, linguistic Darwinism, and racelessness. I now shift the focus of attention to some of the sociopolitical perspectives and decisions that manifest from the depth and breadth of problems surrounding language hegemony for Americans of African descent. I conclude with an analysis of significant educational rulings that have taken place over the last century. A tabular summary is found in Table 4.1.

Much has been written in recent years about the current context of official English and bilingual education, primarily due to the anticipated reality of the browning of our country's population. What is also clear for those that study language politics in a historical manner is the recurring nature of many of the surrounding and interconnected issues at play. While the general population in our country views language use in pragmatic ways, as we notice from the plethora of cases and politics surrounding language (McGroarty, 1992), ideological elements tend to inform the issue of language (Macedo, 2000).

Before Public Law 90-247, which added bilingual education programs under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968, before former Senator Samuel I. Hayakawa (R-CA) initiated a constitutional amendment before the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary of the United States Senate in 1981, and before the Oakland Unified School District adopted a policy statement and directed the superintendent of schools to devise a program to improve the English language acquisition and application skills of African American students in 1996, language policies and politics affecting ethnolinguistic minority people and children were manifest. Linguistic intolerance and antipathy have been the norm when it comes to the changing complexion of the American populace. As discussed below, though the language policy decisions and cases may not have been directed specifically at Americans of African descent, what these cases and politics show is a general current to dismissing the language and culture of any non-Anglo or non-White peoples.

The late 19th and early 20th century, post–Civil War period was a period of great flux. In reaction to the new populations of soon-to-be Americans that emerged in the United States, manifestations of anti-immigration, racial oppression, nativism, and Jim Crowism were rife. This climate of contradiction—an opening and melting of the country's borders juxtaposed with a xenophobic reaction to these groups—was reflected in language politics and tensions, both locally and globally. In what could be described as the beginning of the "first significant language scare" (Ruiz, 2000) at the turn of the century, court decisions and legislations would restrict public language use by ethnolinguistic groups.

Two of the most noteworthy examples of linguistic antipathy were the 1889 Edwards Law of Illinois and the Bennett Law of Wisconsin. Described by Wiley (1998) as efforts to counter the German retreat from public education, the laws attempted to "end language tolerance and the right to lan-

Table 4.1. Significant Educational Rulings Directly (and Indirectly) Affecting the Ethnolinguistic Minority Child of African Descent

Language Laws/Policies	*Targeted Group(s)*	*Summary and Impact of Decision*
Edwards Law of Illinois and Bennett Law of Wisconsin	German Americans	1889 decision attempted to end language tolerance and the right to language choice in education, requiring both public and private elementary schools to use English as medium of instruction; decision repealed but success symbolic due to primacy of English language instruction.
Meyer v. Nebraska, 262 U.S. 390	German Americans	1923 decision overturned English-only instruction statute in Nebraska and Midwestern states, which allowed foreign-language instruction "only after a pupil shall have attained and successfully passed the eighth grade"; decision established shallow precedent impacting individual liberties but not language rights and choice.
Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483	African Americans	1954 decision concerning racially segregated public education resulting in the ruling that segregated educational facilities were "separate and unequal."
Public Law 90-247 (Bilingual Education Act under Title VII of ESEA)	Spanish-speaking Americans	1968 legislation aimed to improve educational opportunities of poor children; reauthorized legislation-clarified goal to develop English proficiency and not to develop child's native language.
Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563	Non-English-speaking Chinese Americans	1974 decision regarding educational rights of language minorities; decision grounded in Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964 obligated school administrators to offer special help for students unable to understand English.

Table 4.1. Significant Educational Rulings Directly (and Indirectly) Affecting the Ethnolinguistic Minority Child of African Descent (Cont.)

Language Laws/Policies	*Targeted Group(s)*	*Summary and Impact of Decision*
Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School v. Ann Arbor School District, 473 F. Supp. 1371	African Americans	1979 ruling extended Equal Educational Opportunities Act to include children who speak minority dialect of English, requiring school district to take action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in instructional programs; case draws attention to statutory exclusion of linguistic minorities whose ancestors spoke pidginized and creolized English despite the fact that judge's interpretation of Title VI statute not intended to apply to non-standard English.
Larry P. by Lucille P. v. Wilson Riles, 793 F2d 969	African Americans	1979 ruling that showed that IQ tests had culturally and a linguistically discriminatory effect on Black children, violating Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964.
English Language Amendment (S.J. Res. 72)	Non- and Limited-English-speaking Americans	1981 Senate resolution that attempted to make English official language of U.S.; resolution died in committee but has been revived in one-half of state statutes and revived in federal initiatives.
Oakland Unified School District Resolution No. 9697-0063	African Americans	1996 resolution to devise program to improve English language acquisition and application skills of African American students, which sparked Ebonics controversy by defining Ebonics as native language of African American students in school district.

guage choice in education by requiring both public and private elementary schools to use English as the language of instruction" (p. 218). Though repealed several years later in 1893, its reversal was symbolic due to the general tenor and primacy of English at the turn of the century (Macias, 1992).

In addition to language laws, language policies too manifested in English literacy requirements, legislated English proficiency, and through deculturalization and Americanization campaigns in colonial territories (Hopson et al., 1998). State-controlled foreign language teaching and stringent literacy rulings complicated voting procedures, or prevented language minority groups from participating (Heath, 1983). Statutory requirements legislating the language requirements for citizenship (Commission on Naturalization, 1905), and the imposition of English in the Philippines and Puerto Rico were not just coincidental. Notice the inherent linguistic and cultural hegemony in the statement articulated by Rolland P. Faulkner—then President Theodore Roosevelt's Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico—who insisted that the instruction of English in Puerto Rican schools would resound liberty and a unique Americanness. English language instruction would make

> Agencies of Americanization in the entire country, and where [schools] would present the American ideal to our youth. Children born under the American flag and the American soil should constantly present this ideal, so that they can feel proud of their citizenship and have the flag that represents the true symbol of liberty. (Lagunne, 1989, in Macedo, 2000)

That the imposition of English-only policies and English literacy requirements on ethnolinguistic groups (especially African Americans, German Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, Mexican Americans, and Japanese Americans) permeated the American culture reveals how the English language requirement and anti-foreign language requirements masked discriminatory intentions on these same groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, and national origin (Leibowitz, 1969, 1971; Wiley, 1998).

There are unique differences between these voluntary and involuntary immigrant groups that are worth a brief mention. For instance, enslaved Africans and the indigenous Indian population were not only denied access to schools, but restrictive laws maintained illiteracy, and historically denied any legal rights under the law (Baugh, 2000). Where typical voluntary immigrants arrived in the United States, the linguistic history and consequence of slavery in Americans of African descent reveal a uniquely different frame of reference.

The events that preceded and proceeded the *Meyer v. Nebraska* case in 1923 are an important case in bringing to light the nature and role of official English status (Crawford, 1992). In post–World War II America even more divisive language politics emerged. These were targeted at ethnolinguistic minority peoples. Nebraska, not unlike other states during this period, prohibited foreign language instruction through the eighth grade so that these languages would be inaccessible to children up to that age. Robert Meyer, a parochial school teacher, was found guilty of teaching a Bible story in German to a 10-year-old child. Upholding Meyer's conviction, the Nebraska Supreme Court suggested that "teaching ancestral languages to children of immigrants was unfavorable to national safety and self-interest" (Wiley, 1998, p. 233).

This case too would be repealed by the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that the verdict violated the Due Process Clause of the 14th amendment, indicating that "the protection of the Constitution extends to all, to those who speak other languages as well as to those born with English on the tongue" (Crawford, 1992, p. 237). Though the *Meyer* ruling defended individual liberties, it was less significant in defending language rights and language choice. Thus, the neglect of the court to address language rights would tacitly affirm the official status of English-language instruction, as articulated in Oliver Wendell Holmes's dissent and argument that the U.S. should have a common language (Wiley, 1998).

In the landmark case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Black children of elementary school age brought an action in the U.S. District Court of Kansas seeking "the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis." The three-judge District Court found that "segregation in public education had a detrimental effect upon Negro children." The Supreme Court unanimously concluded that state-imposed segregated schools were "inherently unequal" and must be abolished. Though it would serve as a harbinger for the civil rights era regarding the desegregation in this country, signaling the beginning of decades of desegregation rulings, *Brown*'s address of the unequal treatment of African American students excludes discussion of their treatment on linguistic grounds. That is, *Brown*'s focus clearly addresses educational inequities based on racial heritage without attention to or consideration of linguistic matters.

The first federal recognition of the educational needs of students whose native language is not English was in the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (BEA; Christian, 1999). Its original intent, in keeping with its accompanying Department of Health, Education, and Welfare memorandum (and the upcoming *Lau* decision), prohibited exclusion from participation in and discrimination in educational programs due to students having a primary language other than English. With the initial goal of improving educational access and attainment among Spanish-speaking American children in the southwest, as well as other children who come from environments where English is not the dominant language, the BEA, until the sweeping reform of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of the current Bush administration, provided federal funds in support of bilingual education for limited English-proficient students in the United States, to the tune of nearly $200 million per annum. The testament to the BEA is that remnants of it lasted nearly 35 years and especially amid great resistance in the early 1970s and most of the 1980s. Qualified personnel and expertise in bilingual education programs have contributed to its own liability (Wiley, 1998), as well as sometimes vague implementation plans and narrow definitions of the targeted beneficiaries, particularly at the onset of the program.

Clearly, however, though the attempt to improve the socioeconomic status of a marginalized population were pragmatic and laudable goals in the case of *BEA*, dominant values, or what Ricento (1998) refers to as "deep values," have influenced bilingual education rather than language policy development. These values foster beliefs and attitudes toward English, non-English languages, and societal bilingualism, such as notions that suggest that unity and cultural integrity in the United States cannot tolerate cultural and linguistic pluralism and the idea that maintenance of immigrant languages and cultures can be intrinsically (and socially) valuable (Ricento, 1998). These dominant notions perpetuate a colonial-like mentality toward non-European cultural and language groups whereby the privileged languages (and preferred varieties) become a kind of social capital that facilitates access to academic and economic advantages for those who hold mastery in the dominant (and standard) language (Wiley, 1996).

Following the civil rights movement, educational language rulings would set the stage for the backlash of incidents related to current official language movement, the Ebonics controversy, and antibilingual initiatives in the United States. By putting into context the flurry of activities that would occur in the generation to follow, one can picture the legacy of these events in shaping language politics and policies at the cusp of the 20th and 21st centuries and beyond.

Lau v. Nichols (1974) was the Supreme Court decision that held that San Francisco schools violated the Civil Rights Act when they failed to provide Chinese-speaking students of limited English proficiency with special language services so they could participate more fully in public education (Christian, 1997). While asserting the rights of language-minority students (i.e., specifically addressing students for whom English is not native), the ruling made no provisions for speakers of nonstandard English with the exception of native Hawaiians, who were provided with special federal categorical funding for bidialectal education. Now the historical and linguistic similarity between Hawaiian English and African American English is an acknowledged linguistic fact; yet federal education legislation has deliberately failed to help African Americans toward greater standard English proficiency (Baugh, 2000). A sign of things to come for the ethnolinguistic minority child of African descent, *Lau's* judicial and political clout would have little to no relevance to African American children, beyond raising doubts about the legitimacy of them being defined as language minority students.

Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School Children, et al. v. Ann Arbor School District Board, also known as the Black English trial, put the linguistic background of African American learners front and center. In the case, which focused on 11 African American learners who were diagnosed as "linguistically handicapped," plaintiffs argued successfully that the school district had failed to provide a number of instructional interventions to accommodate the unique racial and linguistic characteristics of African American children who lived in a low-income housing development in a section of Ann Arbor (Labov, 1981). The Black English ruling would be seen as a landmark following the case, particularly for the students from the Green Road projects. Its longer-term ramifications, however, were short-lived and limited, for a couple of reasons.

Baugh has pointed out on several occasions (1988, 1998, 1999) the failure of the judge's ruling to address the educational consequences facing students for whom standard English is not native, a recurring pattern in educational language policies and politics in this country. While the ruling was in favor of the plaintiffs, the avoidance of adequately defining dialectal differences between standard and nonstandard varieties (based on class, racial/ethnic characteristics) in the judgment handed down has allowed for the cultural pathology argument to reverberate. That is, a combination of maladjusted educational policies and inadequate linguistic diagnoses allowed for African Americans to be placed in remedial or bilingual classes, even after the Black English ruling.

Another argument that has prevented widespread jurisdiction following the Black English ruling lies in the arena in which the case was heard. Unlike *Lau*, for instance, which was heard before the Supreme Court, the Black English trial reached only the federal district court. Its lack of exposure at a national level restricted its broader and wider awareness and impact. Had the school district appealed the decision, a different story would likely have unfolded. Still, the Black English trial did what no other case had done previously; it brought issues of race, education, and language of African Americans together in a court of law. Nonetheless, little evidence remains that the scope of the trial had any influence beyond the African American students at the Green Road housing development in Ann Arbor.

In the same year, the California district court found that the state superintendent had discriminated against Black children in *Larry P. by Lucille P. v. Wilson Riles* (793 F2d 969, 1979, 9th Cir 1984). Focused on IQ testing of

Black children and their inappropriate educable mentally retarded (EMR) evaluation, the court found that IQ tests were culturally discriminating against them and banned the California school systems from using these tests as a measure when evaluating Black children in special education. The implied rationale of the decision contended that standardized tests are often linguistically and culturally biased against students who are not from the majority culture, and that responses on tests depend heavily upon students having culturally based knowledge. The 1979 ruling, which was successfully challenged by Riles several years later, recognized that since most academic, cognitive, and language measures are developed by and for the majority English-speaking culture, their use for students from a non-dominant culture or from a non-English-speaking background allows for discrimination and inappropriate conclusions about students' ability to function and succeed in school settings.

The *Larry P.* case, like the Black English trial, suffered partly the same fate. After *Larry P.*, with the absence of a definitive decision on the appropriate use of standardized tests, lower courts responded inconsistently in cases involving high stakes tests. Whereas the original rulings of *Larry P.* would document the linguistic and cultural hegemony inherent in the use of IQ tests, its wider application would suffer from lack of enforcement, as well as a lack of standards by which inappropriate circumstances are further defined. Nearly 20 years after the original ruling, the California State Department of Education noted its confusion regarding the multicultural assessments that encompass the *Larry P.* case (California Board of Education, 1997).

The essence of the Oakland, California Board of Education resolution that recognized Ebonics (used interchangeably with Black English or African American Vernacular English) as the primary language of many of the district's African American students is largely a victim of conceptual and historical circumstance. Conceptually, the attempt to legitimize the language variety of enslaved descendants has proved a formidable task, and has tended to reinforce colonial notions of language, race, and hegemony in schools and the larger populace.

Whereas the Oakland School board, unlike many urban school districts who ignore or devalue the linguistic consequences of slavery, was taking considerable steps to address the educational plight of the majority of its learners, ethnolinguistic minority children of African descent have generally been thought not to require special programs to aid in their transition to mainstream standard English classrooms. In fact, as Baugh (1998) notes, of the three categorical programs that are most relevant to language minority students, federal support of bilingual education for limited English proficiency students should have, but did not, include students who speak nonstandard varieties of English. As he shows from findings from a national survey, school officials continue to assume that the language variety of students of African descent is akin to pathological speech deficiency. Here, the legacy of the Black English trial is pertinent. The least applied ruling on the trial included the invitation of instructional programs and methods for teachers. Instead, the characterization of Black students as linguistically handicapped has been the most obvious result of the ruling and has fostered their inappropriate placement into special education programs. Baugh writes:

> Based on the presumption that speakers of AAVE would be 'handicapped' in competitive academic environments, pathologists, legislators, English teachers, and educators in general have encouraged black students to master standard English, but they have done so based on policies that are uniformed by relevant linguistic research, thereby restricting the likelihood of black academic success. (pp. 288–289)

The vision of the Ebonics controversy has largely remained unfulfilled, due in part to unclear intentions articulated in the original resolution and to backlash of policy resolutions by state and national policymakers (see Baugh, 2000, for the most articulated viewpoint on the hope, history, and lament of the Ebonics proposal). There is further reason to believe that the limitations to the Oakland policy and resolution mirror the incomplete and unsatisfied promise of a true understanding of racial and linguistic diversity in schools.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

> Language policies have rarely been implemented strictly as ends in themselves; rather, they have been used as means to achieve other purposes. They are often instruments of social control in struggles between groups. (Wiley, 1998, p. 212)

The struggle for equitable and democratic schooling for African Americans has remained one of the more important topics of the 20th century in this country. With the persistent browning of America and the impact of other factors that affect how social groups and schools interact, the role of language discrimination is taking a more overt stance in educational contexts. While educational rulings have been most associated with voluntary immigrants, involuntary (and colonized) immigrant groups like African Americans are oftentimes on the receiving end and victims of educational language policies and politics.

In the historical analysis of language policy in the United States, therefore, much more study is needed relative to standard language policies on second dialect speakers such as African Americans. More attention is clearly needed on the manner standard English and its accompanying ideology (Lippi-Green, 1994, is one starting point, for instance) have become the basis for differential treatment among speakers of stigmatized social dialects and creolized varieties of English. In addition, the evolution of language policies directed at speakers of nonstandard varieties of English and the relationship between official English and standard English language policies deserves further investigation (Wiley, 1999). There is, furthermore, a special need for comparative studies of speakers of stigmatized varieties of English, and how they are affected in the historical development of educational reform agendas and legislation (Baugh, 1995, 1998).

This chapter urges the need to incorporate Americans of African descent into educational discussions and reforms that center on language minorities, and to extend the definition of this group while paying attention to the unique social and political history of ethnolinguistic minority groups in the United States. Only when educational reform accommodates a need to reexamine the unique issues that face African American learners and to imbue them with a goal toward racial and *linguistic* reconciliation will we see the fruits of democracy in our country.

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CHAPTER 5

FAMILY AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPACT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS

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The importance of parents and teachers in fostering the academic development of children and adolescents through parental involvement and teacher support has been known for some time (Connell, Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow, & Usinger, 1995; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Seyfried, 1998; Tucker et al., 2002). However, the term "parental involvement" has often been described as a vague concept used to describe parents' involvement in their children's lives in some capacity (e.g., participation in school activities, discussion of school with children, and help with homework) that is generally associated with positive academic outcomes (Falbo, Lein, & Amador, 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Taylor, Hinton, & Wilson, 1995). This chapter has two main purposes: (1) We elaborate on the mean-

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ing of parental involvement; and (2) we discuss how perceptions of teacher support and parental involvement interact to impact grades in a sample of low-resource and high-achieving African American students.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement has been found to be important at all ages (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). However, researchers have failed to clearly determine what type of parental involvement is more salient for the academic outcomes of high school adolescents, especially for African American adolescents. Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) measured parental involvement from student reports of their parents' frequency of involvement in their high school education. They concluded that involvement from African American parents was not a good predictor of academic success and had no relation with students' academic outcomes. However, other researchers have found opposite results and have found positive relationships between parental involvement and academic outcomes in African American families (Slaughter-Defoe & Rubin, 2001; Taylor et al., 1995).

A possible explanation for these mixed findings is due to the varying definitions of parental involvement. According to Marcon (1999), the key to contrasting results may lie in how researchers measure the construct of parental involvement. Epstein (1996) described six different types of parental involvement and argued that many researchers have a misconception that all types of parental involvement lead to positive academic outcomes. She posits that each type of parental involvement produces different student outcomes and that not all forms of involvement quickly lead to student learning and academic success. Missing from many discussions of parental involvement is the students' perspective on how they interpret their parents' level of involvement. Perceived parental involvement needs to be examined because it is how students interpret their experiences and make meaning out of them, which leads to their outcomes (Spencer, 1995, 1999). However, perceived parental involvement alone is not sufficient for producing successful adolescent school outcomes. Perceived teacher support also plays a major role in the academic achievement of adolescents.

TEACHER SUPPORT

The role of teachers needs to be examined further because many teachers, willingly or unwillingly, lower their expectations for African American students (Guerra, Attar, & Weissberg, 1997; Slaughter-Defoe, 1997). Teachers' lowered expectations can diminish the pursuit of academic achievement in some African American students (Delpit, 1995; Ford, 1998; Ford & Harris, 1990; Irvine, 1990). According to Wilson, Cooke, and Arrington (1997), African American students often experienced school difficulty because they lacked *academic* self-esteem rather than intelligence or ability. Low school self-esteem develops from instances of negative teacher perceptions and adverse experiences in earlier grades, which impacts academic outcomes in later years (Irvine, 1990; Slaughter-Defoe & Rubin, 2001; Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, in press). Researchers have shown teacher support to be positively related to student effort in African American adolescents but African American students frequently perceive less support from teachers than European students (Wentzel, 1994). Accordingly, as students perceive a continuous lack of support from their teachers, they eventually became disengaged in school despite their parents' efforts to be involved in their home and school lives.

Interactions between Parental Involvement and Teacher Support

Parental involvement and teacher support can have direct and indirect effects on students' school achievement (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Falbo et al., 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Tucker et al., 2002). Direct effects are evident when involvement from parents and teachers coincide with activities such as increased help with schoolwork or monitoring of school progress. Indirect effects of parental involvement and teacher support are present when increased involvement and support influence student motivation and achievement. In addition to the individual effects of parental involvement and teacher support, researchers have also investigated how interactions between the two environments enhance the academic achievement of students (Epstein, 1990; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Raffaele & Knoff, 1999).

Interactions between home and school environments make it easier for parents and teachers to facilitate school success in children and adolescents. Researchers have indicated that high quality linkages between the two environments encourage parents and teachers to work together to facilitate academic achievement in students (Paulson, Marchant, & Rothlisberg, 1998; Slaughter-Defoe, 1997). As indicated by our conceptual framework (e.g., Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Spencer, 1995, 1999), an integrated perspective that examines connections between home and school environments is needed to foster positive academic outcomes for adolescents.

These connections are especially salient when examining low-income African American samples. Raffaele and Knoff (1999) suggested that many educators often stopped trying to involve poor African American parents because school personnel believed that they were unable to work with the school to identify positive solutions for their children. Therefore, many urban schools may focus solely on interventions that can be implemented at school without the parents' assistance. However, students' academic achievement is the most pronounced when parents and teachers interact and work together to ensure academic success. For example, Gutman and Midgley (2000) found students that perceived high levels of both parental involvement and teacher support had the best academic outcomes, as indicated by their grade point averages. Slaughter-Defoe and Rubin (2001) expand on these issues. They concluded that parents were not solely responsible for children and adolescents' early achievements and later educational goal setting. In fact, both parents and primary grade teachers were responsible for students' later academic outcomes; parents continued to play a significant role in the academic lives of adolescents; and parents were found to be important educational role models influencing the level of adolescents' educational goals. These results suggested that both parental involvement *and* teacher support are necessary for the academic success of African American students.

While the importance of the interaction between parental involvement and teacher support is apparent, research on parental involvement and teacher support has lead to some concerns. Traditionally, studies have not focused on African American *adolescent* populations and biases about their academic abilities have persisted. Research has been damaging to African American students because literature has traditionally examined them from a deficits perspective by focusing on why African American students underachieve rather than focusing on variables that lead to successful outcomes (Spencer, Noll, Stolzfus, & Harpalini, 2001). Utilization of a deficit perspective promotes person-blame interpretations of school failure and assumes African American students choose failure and underachievement over success (see Fordham & Ogbu, 1996; Ogbu, 1997). Additionally, teachers' misconceptions about the importance of education for African American students have resulted in them providing less supportive environments and lowering their expectations for African American students (Garibaldi, 1992; Pigott & Cowen, 2000).

These misconceptions have been associated with the parents as well. Perceptions of parental involvement from African American families has been hindered because of the notion held by many school officials and researchers that poor African American students have parents that are less capable of being involved because of their limited resources (Moles, 1993; Raffaele & Knoff, 1999). However, parents in urban communities want to become more involved, but they often lack support from schools to help them become more involved and help their children succeed academically

(Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1996). Also, research on parental involvement has largely overlooked adolescents because of beliefs that meaningful home and school involvement was most important during the elementary years (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999).

When examining the impact of parental involvement and teacher support the students' perceptions of these variables are often overlooked. Students can perceive experiences within their family and school lives as stressful situations that can divert their attention and interest from school (Phelan, Yu, & Davidson, 1994). Our conceptual framework places an emphasis on understanding vulnerable populations, such as ethnic minorities, with an integrative and assets-focused approach (see Spencer, 1995, 1999). This conceptualization is important in understanding adolescents' perceptions of how the involvement from parents and teachers impact their academic outcomes.

The current study examined how student-perceived parental involvement and teacher support impacted the academic outcomes in a sample of low-resource and high-achieving adolescents. We hypothesized that perceived parental involvement and perceived teacher support would predict adolescents' academic outcomes. We also hypothesized that an interaction between perceived parental involvement and perceived teacher support would exist and therefore serve as a better predictor of academic outcomes. Specifically, we expected that students that perceived high levels of both parental involvement and teacher support would have higher GPAs.

METHOD

Participants

Eighty-six African American students participated in the study. The students were in 9th–12th grade and attended a public high school in a large urban city in the south. Their ages ranged from 14–18 years (females = 65; *M* age = 16, *SD* = .95). The sample is representative of the larger school population, which is 90% African American, with the remaining 10% of the student population of European, Hispanic, and Asian descent. Additionally, the current sample and the larger school's population are comprised of "working poor" families (Slaughter, 1988), which is 90% of the students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch programs. Also, 50% of the students reported that they lived in single-parent households.

While the students attended a public school in a district where failure was more common than success, the population where the students were recruited is considered to be an environment that fosters school success. In fact, information from the school's records indicated that 93% of the students were accepted into a four-year college or university and the remaining 7% had plans to attend vocational programs or enter into the military. For the current sample, when asked how many years they thought they would attend school, the responses indicated that 75.3% had aspirations to attend "graduate or professional school after college," 23.6% planned to attend "college," and 1.1% wanted to go to "trade or vocational school." We identify the students as high achieving, not only because of their attendance at the school but also because of the efforts that they must take to attend. For example, the students' school day was split between two environments. Half of the school day was structured around a science and mathematics curriculum at a center for science and mathematics and the other half was geared toward the school district's high school curriculum at the student's home school in a different part of the city and was comprised of 10 different schools. Additionally, two students were home-schooled.

These students typically came from environments where science and mathematics interests were low. However, unlike magnet schools in the area, the only requirement for attendance at this public center for science and mathematics (that was not a magnet school) was to have an interest in a science and math curriculum. Additionally, a teacher interviewed each student for admissions and the only criterion for exclusion was that the student was not in special education.

Procedure

The data for the current study came from the first year of a cross-sectional longitudinal research project focused on understanding factors related to vulnerability and resilience among low-resource, high-achieving students. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to address the students' responses to several areas associated with the social and educational experiences of urban youth. The qualitative data came from exit interviews with graduating seniors. Qualitative data gave the participants the opportunity to add their own opinions into the research project. It also served as a way for the research team to conduct a validity check in regard to interpreting responses.

Measures

Qualitative data. Six focus groups were conducted with 26 of the 31 graduating seniors. As suggested by Krueger (1994, p. 78), each focus group consisted of 5–6 students. These small groups permitted students to feel more comfortable and to share information without feeling pressured to answer in a certain fashion. During these interviews the students provided information on their opinions about their high school experiences and the individuals that were most influential in their school success. These interviews were videotaped and coded to identify similar experiences among the students and to identify individuals that were most influential in their lives. Two African American researchers coded the videos separately and compared responses. Initial comparisons indicated 95% agreement.

Quantitative data. The data were collected through questionnaires that gathered information about the adolescents' life experiences and the individuals that helped them to succeed. Several instruments, including the measures of interest to the current study, were administered and provided information about the adolescents' lives, experiences, and contexts. The students completed the survey in small groups during the school day. They marked their responses as the questionnaire was read aloud to the students, which allowed for an expeditious administration process. Additionally, African American males and females comprised the research team and proctored the survey completion process.

Measures

Parental involvement was defined as adolescents' perceptions of their parents' efforts to support them in their home and school lives. Students' perceptions of parental involvement were measured in two domains, which is consistent with the work of Epstein (1996) and others that have described different types of involvement. Each type of involvement has been shown to influence academic outcomes differently.

Perceived home involvement. Home involvement was the students' perceptions of the amount of involvement their parents had in their daily lives. Home involvement was similar to Epstein's parenting construct because it incorporated some of her ideas of engaging in appropriate childrearing skills. Students' responded to three questions that rated their parents' daily involvement in their lives. The responses ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. (Sample item: "I have lots of good conversations with my parents"; $r_\alpha = .85$). Students that perceived their parents had more involvement in their daily lives rated them higher for home involvement.

Perceived school involvement. School involvement was the students' perceptions of the amount of involvement their parents had in their school lives. School involvement was similar to Epstein's learning at home and decision making construct because it incorporated some of her ideas about helping with students academic activities at home and participating in school decisions to support their students. Students responded to four questions that rated their parents' involvement in their school lives. The responses ranged from (1) never to (5) very often. (Sample item: "How often do parents help you with your schoolwork?"; $r_\alpha = .75$). Students that perceived their parents had more involvement in their school lives rated them higher for school involvement.

Perceived teacher support. Teacher support was defined as the adolescents' perceptions of how much their teachers cared about their academic achievement. It was measured by adolescents' perceptions of the amount of support their teachers provided. The students responded to three questions that rated the amount of perceived support from their teachers. The responses ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. (Sample items: "My teacher really cares about me"; 3 items, $r_\alpha = .65$). Students that perceived their teachers were more supportive of their academic abilities rated them higher for teacher support.

Academic achievement. Science and mathematics grade point averages (GPA) were used as an indication of academic achievement. The GPA cumulative average was based on a 4.0 scale (A = 4.0, B = 3.0, etc.). The grades were obtained from the students' academic transcripts.

RESULTS

The statistical analyses are presented in three sections. The first section examined the descriptive findings gathered from the questionnaires and the qualitative data provided by the exit interviews. The second section examined the correlations between the variables in the study. The final section examined the interaction effects of perceived parental involvement and perceived teacher support on adolescents' grade point averages.

Descriptive Findings

As indicated earlier, the majority of the students in the study had aspirations of attending either college or graduate school programs, 24% and 75%, respectively. Sixty-two percent of the students in the study also reported that they liked school. During the focus groups, the seniors characterized their overall school experience as positive. Many of the students attributed their positive experiences at school to the professionalism and training of many of their teachers at the science and math center. Nine out of the 26 seniors interviewed (35%) commented on how their teachers' professional training was helpful in their school lives. Students reported how many of their teachers held advanced degrees in the subject areas they taught, which made it easier for them to get expert help when they were having problems. The teachers were described as enthusiastic and passion-ate about teaching by the students, which was not always the case in their home schools. Eighteen of the students (69%) reported how their teachers' enthusiasm and encouragement helped them through school. One student explained how one teacher spent extra time with her to make sure her grades improved, "I was making C's and D's, now I'm making A's and B's. He encouraged me not to give up." Actions such as these were not rare from the teachers at the science and math center. In fact, many of the teachers volunteered their time before and after school and on Saturdays to assist students that needed extra help.

In addition to perceived teacher support, the students also indicated that they perceived their parents played a major role in their academic and home lives. Eighty-seven percent of the students in the study reported on a scale of 1–5, 1 being never and 5 being always, that their parents asked at least most of the time to all of the time, 4 and 5, respectively, where and who they were going out with. Students reported that their parents monitored their behaviors but they also reported that they were happy that their parents were concerned with their lives. Fifty-nine percent of the students reported that if they had an important concern in their lives that they would turn to their parents for help. The seniors in the exit interviews made references to the importance of their parents for helping them accomplish their school goals. Eleven students (42%) mentioned how their parents actively assisted them with school and making choices about their future. One student commented how her mother was the driving force behind all her academic decisions, "My Momma do [*sic*] everything for me." Many of the students reported that they were at the school with the heavy science and math curriculum because their parents made them attend. However, the majority of them were happy with their parents' decisions because the school better prepared them for college. Sixteen students (62%) reported how the knowledge and skills they learned at school would carry over and prove beneficial in the long run. One student reported how attending the school was preparing him for the future, "I wanna [*sic*] learn, I wanna go to college. I need to get this stuff for college." Another student stated how much more she was prepared for college because of the things she learned: "I'm more prepared than the people at my home school." The students believed their preparation at the school placed them a step ahead of other students that did not work as hard. Overall, the descriptive findings indicated that the students perceived their parents and teachers played important roles that allowed them to be successful in school.

Correlational Analyses

Table 5.1 presents the means, standard deviations, and Pearson's two-tailed correlations between all the variables examined in the study. As expected, perceived home involvement had a statistically significant and positive correlation with perceived school involvement ($r = .49$, $p < .001$) and perceived teacher support ($r = .34$, $p < .01$). Perceived school involvement was also positively correlated with perceived teacher support ($r = .22$, $p < .05$). However, perceived teacher support was the only variable that had a statistically significant correlation with students' GPA ($r = .29$, $p < .01$). Adolescents' perceived parental involvement, home and school, was not statistically related to their GPAs. These results suggested academic performance was positively related to adolescents' perceptions of their teachers' support for their academic accomplishments and not adolescents' perceived levels of parental support.

Table 5.1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Examined Variables (Students $n = 86$)

Variables	*Means*	*SD*	*HmInv*	*ScInv*	*TeSup*	*GPA*	*Age*	*Gender*
1 HmInv	3.77	1.14	—	$.49^{***}$	$.34^{**}$	.01	–.12	$.19^{+}$
2 ScInv	3.16	1.03		—	$.22^{*}$	–.06	$–.25^{*}$	$.22^{*}$
3 TeSup	3.65	.79			—	$.29^{**}$	.06	$.23^{*}$
4 GPA	2.78	.75				—	$.21^{*}$	.15
5 Age	16	.95					—	.05
6 Gender	1.76	.43						—

$^{+}p < .10$ $^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$

Note: HmInv, Home Involvement; ScInv, School Involvement; TeSup, Teacher Support; GPA, Grade Point Average; Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female

Interaction Effects of Parental Involvement and Teacher Support

The next set of analyses examined the hypothesis that the interaction between perceived parental support and perceived teacher support would serve as a better predictor of academic achievement. Interactions between perceived home involvement and perceived teacher support and between perceived school involvement and perceived teacher support were examined to determine their effects on adolescents' GPA. In accordance to the procedures described by Baron and Kenny (1986), two-way interaction terms were created. Next, separate hierarchical regression models were performed for the two interaction terms. First, results indicated that the interaction term of home involvement and teacher support was nonsignificant.

Results from the other hierarchical regression revealed that the interaction term between school involvement and teacher support had a statistically significant relation with students' GPA (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Interaction Effects of Perceived Parental Involvement and Teacher Support on GPA

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Model 1			
School Involvement	–0.09	0.08	–.13
Teacher Support	0.30	0.10	.32**
Model 2			
School Involvement	0.74	0.33	1.02*
Teacher Support	1.07	0.32	1.14***
ScInv_TeachSup	–0.24	0.09	–1.57*

+ $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Note: ScInv_TeachSup, School Involvement and Teacher Support Interaction

Specifically, the results indicated that teacher support was a statistically significant contributor in the first model ($\beta = .32$, $p < .01$; (F (2, 83) = 4.53, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .08$). However, in the second model, school involvement, teacher support, and the interaction term (school involvement × teacher support) had statistically significant relations with GPA ($\beta = 1.02$, $p < .05$; $\beta = 1.14$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -1.57$, $p < .05$, respectively). The overall model was statistically significant (F (3, 82) = 5.44, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .14$). The results indicated that the addition of the interaction term accounted for an additional 6% of the variance in the model. These results suggested that adolescents' science and math grades were better predicted when the interactions between teacher support and school involvement were taken into account (see Figure 5.1). Based on the results in Figure 5.1, adolescents performed better when they perceived high teacher support and perceived low school involvement. However, when perceived teacher support was low, higher perceived school involvement indicated an increase in grades. This suggested that as adolescents perceived lower levels of teacher support, their perception of higher parental school involvement helped them achieve higher grades as opposed to when they perceived low levels of teacher support and school involvement.

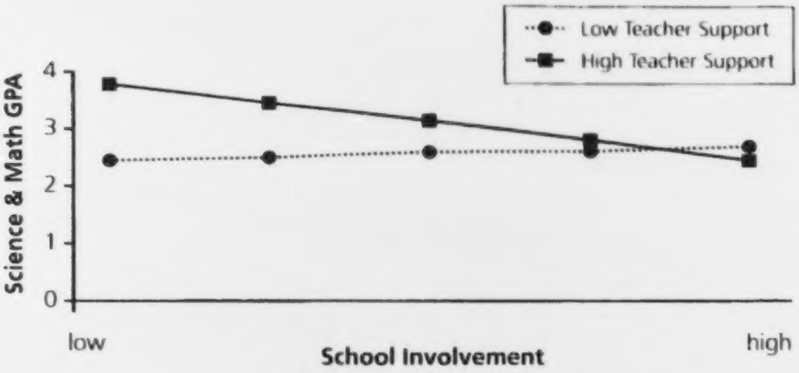

Figure 5.1. The interaction effects of perceived school involvement and perceived teacher support on students' GPA.

DISCUSSION

After describing distinctions in parental involvement, the purposes of the study were to examine first if adolescent perceived parental involvement and perceived teacher support predicted academic outcomes and second to determine if the interaction between perceived parental involvement and perceived teacher support better predicted adolescents' academic outcomes. Results indicated that adolescents' perceived home involvement (e.g., conversations with parents) was not related to the GPA; however, perceived school involvement (e.g., parents checking homework) was related to better grades. Additionally, the interaction between perceived school involvement and perceived teacher support had a statistically significant relation and predicted students' academic outcomes. Although these results supported our hypotheses our findings were not completely expected.

First, our findings unexpectedly indicated that both perceived home and school involvement were not significant predictors of adolescents' GPAs. These results appeared to support Steinberg and colleagues' (1992) findings, which suggested involvement from African American parents was not a strong predictor of academic outcomes in adolescents. However, descriptive and qualitative analyses from the current study did not support their conclusions. The students in the current study indicated that their parents were actively involved in their lives and that their parents' involvement was a major reason why they completed high school and had aspirations to continue their education, which is consistent to quantitative findings by Slaughter-Defoe and Rubin (2001).

The next set of unexpected findings was revealed in the interaction results. We expected to find results similar to Gutman and Midgley (2000) that perceptions of high parental involvement and teacher support would lead to better academic outcomes. However, as reported in the current study, adolescent GPAs were highest when adolescents perceived high teacher support and lower levels of school involvement. Perceived school involvement had the strongest impact when adolescents perceived low levels of teacher support. The findings suggested a question: Does parents' school involvement become more important for adolescents that perceive low teacher support at school? The current results suggest an affirmative response. Additionally, parents may curtail the amount of involvement to fit the needs of their adolescents. When students perceived greater support from their teachers, they reported less involvement from parents and their grades increased. However, when students perceived they had less support from teachers, they also perceived more involvement from their parents in their school lives. Future research needs to examine parent and teacher interactions in a wider range of academic outcomes to determine their exact relation with adolescent outcomes.

The current study's results were similar to results reported by Spencer, Dupree, Swanson, and Cunningham (1996) that indicated African American parents were the most important people in the lives of students and the parents were the ones who would help them achieve their goals. In the Spencer and colleagues study, adolescents in high-risk environments relied on their parents for support to help them achieve their goals even when their parents' behaviors were viewed as a hassle. Similar themes were evident in the current study based on adolescents' reports of the importance of their parents in them attending the science and math center and their progress through school.

The results from the current study suggested that perceived teacher support was more influential than perceived parental involvement in predicting academic outcomes in African American adolescents. However, an alternative explanation for the results may be that perceived teacher support is a better predictor of adolescent GPA because teachers have an immediate and direct impact on adolescents' school performance. Perceived parental involvement, on the other hand, may have a more long-term effect on adolescents' academic performance. According to Slaughter-Defoe and Rubin (2001), parents play a lifelong educational role in their children and adolescents' lives. Students reported that their parents were major inspirations in their lives that made them want to work hard and succeed in school. This was evident in the large number of adolescents that successfully graduated high school and went on to pursue a college education, as well as anticipated on attending college and graduate school.

The current study measured academic achievement from adolescents' science and math GPA only. If perceived teacher support is a predictor of immediate school outcomes, then it is not surprising that it would be a significant predictor of GPA as opposed to perceived parental involvement.

However, it is likely that adolescents become academically resilient because they perceive greater involvement from parents, which motivates them to continue to challenge themselves and reach their highest levels of academic potential. Future research needs to explore the relevance of both parents and teachers in immediate and long-term academic pursuits. If parents know their efforts will assist their adolescents' academic outcomes in the long term, they can persist in their efforts even if their adolescents' grades do not demonstrate an immediate payoff.

Finally, the current study underscores the importance of examining specific types of parental involvement. As suggested by Epstein (1996), different types of parental involvement produce different outcomes in students. In the current study only perceived school involvement was statistically related to students' grades. Perceived home involvement was not related to adolescents' GPAs but it might be related to other outcomes linked to psychosocial well-being that would indirectly impact academic outcomes. For example, as indicated in the qualitative information, perceived parental involvement was indicated as one of the reasons for school success and high educational aspirations. Future research needs to examine how involvement is related to other areas of success in African American adolescents and not just in grades. If involvement is not always related to increases in grades then the importance of parental involvement may be lost.

Several research limitations to the study should be noted. First, the current study was based on a sample comprised of mostly female adolescents. Spencer and colleagues (1996) reported that gender differences were very important, especially in African American adolescents because of the unique social experiences of African American males and females. Future research should address gender-specific patterns of perceived parental involvement and perceived teacher support. Also, the sample was comprised of cross-sectional data that indicated seniors' academic performance was better than younger students. However, these results do not explain if the reason for better academic performance was due to the fact that the remaining seniors were the students that best demonstrated academically resilient behaviors. Future research needs to examine longitudinal findings to determine if the low academic performance of younger students was due to them not being as academically resilient as their counterparts that succeed and make it to their senior year in school. Finally, the study examined academic achievement only by adolescents' science and math grade point averages. Future research needs to examine other ways to measure success because standardized test scores and GPAs may not completely demonstrate academically resilient behaviors in all African American adolescents. As indicated by the study, the senior class had a 93% college acceptance rate, which indicates high levels of school success that may not have been evident by their grade point averages alone.

Overall, the current study demonstrated that perceived parental involvement and perceived teacher support were important for adolescents' short- and long-term academic outcomes. Perceived home and school involvement was important in adolescents' lives even if both types of involvement were not related to GPA. These adolescents were successful students and obtained levels of success that were not always evident by their GPA. Adolescents appeared to support the notion that parents provided essential, long-term support of academic goals, while teachers were important for immediate school achievement outcomes. Regardless, both the home and school environments play important roles to encourage adolescents to work hard and succeed academically both in the short and long term.

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CHAPTER 6

BATTLING BEFORE BIRTH

Institutionalized Barriers to the Health and Well-Being of African American Children

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State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

INTRODUCTION

> *Without health, life is not life; it is only a state of languor and suffering*
> —Francios Rabelais (cited in McWilliams, 1996 p. 120)

If any group epitomizes suffering, vulnerability, and a lack of choice, it is poor children. While all babies are at the mercy of adults for their care, children of poverty are in particular need of insulators from the variables that hinder health, learning capacity, and school achievement because their caretakers do not command the resources to protect them. As a result, impoverished youngsters are more apt to be born underweight, be malnourished, and susceptible to disease and to environmental toxins. The implications of these poverty markers do not disappear after birth or early childhood, but rather persist into adulthood.

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It seems inconceivable that some children in the United States battle hunger and health deterioration at rates more akin to children in developing nations. However, the inconceivable is a reality for poor African American children. On virtually every indices of health, the gap between African Americans and Whites has prevailed or widened over the last 20 years. As a result of the complex interaction between health, poverty and education, the paramount question for many low-income African American babies is whether they will survive to adulthood (Harper & Marcus, 1999).

By no means are public health agencies the only organizations culpable for child well-being. However, given their historic mission, these agencies are uniquely positioned to enhance the life chances of the populations they are charged to protect, most notably the poor. This chapter reviews America's public health policy commitment to children by calling attention to the relationship between hindrances to health initiatives, poverty, discrimination, and the educational prospects of African American children. Wilkenson's (1999) Relative Income Hypothesis will be applied to provide a theoretical explanation of how health disparities between classes in periods of economic prosperity are predictable.

Copious volumes document the education-related consequences that result from less-than-optimal health. For example, since poor children are more vulnerable to environmentally based poisoning, malnutrition, and chronic illnesses, they are more disposed to disabilities that in turn limit their ability to engage in "normal" physical and intellectual activities (Fujiura & Yamaki, 2000). As of 1997, 19% of America's children, nearly one in five, subsisted below the poverty line (Children's Defense Fund, 2000; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2000). But even this startling statistic masks the concentrations of poverty in the African American community and their health implications.

Two-thirds of African American children live in or near poverty and in terms of health, children in this category are twice as likely as their White counterparts to have no stable source of health care. An absence of stable health care reduces the likelihood that children will be immunized, screened for toxins, or receive early diagnoses of treatable conditions. Consequently, poor health can be the root cause of emotional, neurological, and social dysfunction, which impair educational readiness. In addition, African American populations, while dispersed through the United States, are concentrated in the same geographic locations as the national pockets of poverty and poor schools, namely urban centers and the southeast region of the country (Office of Minority Health, 2000).

Numerically, there are more poor White children than African American children. However, upon closer examination, the unequal distribution of poverty is evident when one considers that 10% of the total population of White children are poor, while 36% of the total population of African

American children live in poverty (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2000). This biased distribution of poverty generates questions about the institutional barriers that perpetuate the confluence of poverty in the African American community.

POVERTY, PREJUDICE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

It has been said that "poverty paves a common pathway from minority status to poor health care and illness, and the root cause of that poverty is the legacy of historical racism..." (Hogue & Hargraves, 2000 p. 13). As such, isolated evaluations of poverty and health, race and health, or even politics and health inadequately account for the factors influencing the persistence of inequity. When views omit or deny the interactions between poverty, health, race, and politics, deeply entrenched historical institutionalized barriers to well-being continue to be minimized.

Poverty is fertile ground for health and educational deprivation that diminish the prospects of children who personify the tragedy of the income gap between the poor and the rich, which has increased rather than decreased in recent decades (Rainwater & Smeeding, 1997). It has been estimated that one in three American children will experience the ramifications of poverty at some period during their childhood and a disproportionate percentage of these victims are African American (Children's Defense Fund, 2000; Office of Minority Health, 2000). Unfortunately, even short bouts of deprivation in critical developmental years can yield long-term consequences. Children do not recover as well as adults even after the amelioration of poverty for numerous reasons, two of which are their dependence on adults and the social structures around them (Harper & Marcus, 1999; UNICEF, 2001).

In some cases, race-based data collection patterns relative to health do not separate children's issues from those of adults. In the absence of disaggregated data, general health indicators for poor Blacks serve as a proxy. However, there is inherent value in compiling health and poverty data of adults and children, because, many poor children, if not ill themselves, are cared for by chronically ill adults.

If health is used as a general indices of well-being, America's poor youngsters do not fair much better than children in developing nations (Rainwater & Smeeding, 1997; Wilkinson, 1999; Workgroup on Infant Mortality, 2000). For example, the life expectancy of individuals in China, Bangladesh, and certain regions of India are higher than African Americans living in Harlem (Lynch et al., 1999). Infant mortality of African American babies (death before the age of 1) is twice that of White babies. Sixty-one percent of the children that die between the ages of 1 and 4 in the United States are African American. Among children between the ages of 5 and 14, as a group African

American youth constitute the highest proportion of premature deaths (29%). Thus, while raw numbers of premature mortalities declined by almost half since 1980, African American children bear the dubious distinction of constituting the major percentage of those who die before adulthood (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2000).

The National Vital Statistics Report (2000), produced by the National Center of Health Statistics, disaggregated the diseases that disproportionately cause the premature death of African American children when compared to White children. As per the U.S. Census Bureau, African Americans constitute 13% of the national population (Stolberg, 2001). Yet Black children, as noted in Tables 6.1 and 6.2, consistently contribute to total mortality rates in excess of 20%.

Table 6.1. Major Causes of Death in 1- to 4-Year-Olds by Race in 1998 (Adapted from Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics, 2000)

Cause of Death	*African Americans (Percent of the total deaths by category)*	*Whites (Percent of the total deaths by category)*
Diseases of the heart	30% (64 per 100,000)	63% (136 per 100,000)
Pneumonia and influenza	30% (44 per 100,000)	67% (98 per 100,000)

Ongoing disparities are apparent in the percentages of African American youth suffering from maladies that are double and in some cases triple their representation in the total population. For example, of the total number of children of all races per 100,000 births that die between the ages of 1 to 4, African Americans represent 30% of those who perish of diseases of the heart. Furthermore, 30% of children dying from pneumonia and influenza are also African American.

Table 6.2. Major Causes of Death in 5-to 14-Year-Olds by Race in 1998 (Adapted from Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics, 2000)

Cause of Death	*African Americans as a percent of the total deaths by category*	*Whites as a percent of the total deaths by category*
Diseases of the heart	27% (89 per 100,000)	69% (224 per 100,000)
Pneumonia and influenza	23% (28 per 100,000)	73% (89 per 100,000)
Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and allied conditions	42% (64 per100,000)	51% (78 per 100,000)

As noted in Table 6.2, in each of the three cases—diseases of the heart, pneumonia and influenza, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases such as asthma—African Americans again experience disproportionate death rates. In the case of diseases of the heart and pneumonia and influenza, 27% and 23% of total deaths involve Black children, respectively. Most notably in this age group (5- to 14-year-olds), chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and related conditions kill 64 of every 100,000 children in America. As a result, 42% of the children who die of asthma-related conditions are African Americans.

Should poor children survive, through no fault of their own they become complicit in the perpetuation of their family's poverty because of the care they require and the high costs associated with medical treatment (Bartlett, Hart, Satterthwaite, Barra, & Missair, 1999). Since many of the poor are actually working poor, child health issues threaten the economic stability of their whole family because of the resources required for recovery and lost time on the job, which threatens employment. Poor children and African American children in particular find themselves without health insurance because parents are unable to afford private insurance that would in the long run reduce the economic burden of illness. Unfortunately, even though caretakers work for low wages, families often find themselves ineligible for Medicaid because of qualification benchmarks (Sherman, 1998).

Socioeconomic status alone does not account for disparities in chronic disease rates between Blacks and Whites. African Americans, regardless of income and geographic location, have been reported to receive less aggressive care from health providers. Even when they present themselves for treatment at the early signs of illness, they are less likely to receive the diagnostically appropriate tests that their symptoms warrant. Furthermore, African Americans, regardless of income, tend to live in medically underserved areas. Some research findings suggest that differential medical treatment is grounded in cultural biases and communication difficulties between medical professionals and their patients (Keith, 2000; Mueller, Ortega, Parker, Patil, & Askenazi, 1999). Health disparities have unremarkably resulted in a nearly 8-year difference in life expectancy for African Americans as opposed to Whites (Garrett, 2000). Thus, the quality and rigor of medical treatment is sensitive not only to class but also to race.

Chronic illness trends in the rural Black population are particularly compelling since there is virtually no argument that health disparities exist. One example of health inequities can be found in the prevalence of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, which are significantly higher for rural Blacks than urban Blacks or rural or urban dwelling Whites. Low-income rural Blacks present themselves for treatment far less frequently. Mortality rates for rural Blacks with and without Medicaid coverage are more than twice as high as their White counterparts for these two disease categories. African American females living in rural communities are screened for breast and ovarian cancer at significantly lower rates than rural Whites or urban African American women. Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are three times as liable to be poor as rural Whites. Rural minority residents tend also to be poorer in terms of real income than either their White rural or minority urban counterparts (Slifkin, Goldsmith, & Ricketts, 2000).

Health prospects for the rural Black poor are further reduced because of a lack of adequate health insurance, understaffed hospitals and clinics, and transportation deficits that result in patients presenting themselves for treatment in the advanced stages of illness. As a result, poor individuals are more inclined to die from chronic illnesses. If treated earlier, such illnesses would not have resulted in mortality (Keith, 2000).

Rural minority health as the "weakest link in American health care" (Size, 1999, p. 27) is even more apparent when one considers the plight of southern rural minority children. According to the Children's Defense Fund (1998), of the nation's poorest 100 counties, 84 are located in the south and African Americans represent the majority of the population in 34 of those communities. Southern Black children are two and one-half times more likely to live in poverty as southern White children. Seven out of ten southern families that are poor are supported by at least one working member; however, low wages in this region prohibit elevation above the poverty level. Of the nearly 3 million poor southern children, 1 in 9 lived in extreme poverty subsisting on family incomes of less than $120/week for a family of three.

The health prospects for urban and rural African American children are inextricably linked to the costs of being poor and a minority. Prevailing biases of medical personnel exacerbate the health disadvantage of the populations in greatest need of attention, making optimal health more difficult to achieve. Consider the current distribution of HIV and AIDS cases in the United States. AIDS is ranked number 15 in diseases that take the lives of Americans, however, it is the number one cause of death for African Americans between the ages of 25 and 44 (Stolberg, 2001).

Just as concentrations of poverty are masked by national averages, the same holds true in HIV/AIDS cases in America. Current census data indicate that African Americans comprise 13% of the population. The numbers of new HIV cases have decreased markedly from the 1992 high of nearly 80,000 per year to 40,000 per year in 2000. However, of those 40,000 new cases, more than half are African American. Furthermore, the epidemic of HIV and AIDS has been called a "multiple epidemic" because of its concentrations in certain sects of the population; for example, the rural south and inner cities, incidentally home to the majority of poor African Americans

(Stolberg, 2001). Despite the continued prevalence of this disease, demonstrative public support is fading perhaps because of Wilkenson's RIH predictions that public health support declines even in the face of significant disease incidents if that disease disproportionately affects the poor.

It is germane to distinguish the difference between the historic roles of public health agencies versus medical or health care facilities, particularly when considering economically disadvantaged populations. Their purposes, while dependent upon each other, are fundamentally different. Public health in the United States is a system whose interventions are rooted in two scientific tenets. The first is the relationship between disease and germs, as advanced by Louis Pasteur. The second tenet, which is more relevant to this discussion, is the value of disease prevention in the most vulnerable sects of society as a means of protecting the health of the nation at large (Garrett, 2000).

Public health agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control, are primarily concerned with preventative health measures in low-income communities because of the scientific evidence that failure to intervene on behalf of these populations exact costs on national resources and well-being. Medical or health care professionals care for individuals that present themselves for treatment of acute and or chronic maladies. Thus, health care professionals are integral contributors to public health, but by virtue of their mission do not embody the public health charge in its totality.

To their credit, many health and public health officials have long argued that improved national health requires integration of diverse policies overseen by the Centers for Disease Control, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Education, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This movement is grounded in public health policy analyses that have revealed gross failures of discrete incremental interventions, which have left little more than a dent on the health and well-being prospects of the poor in the United States (Garrett, 2000; Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner, & Prothrow-Stith, 1997). In other words, while the rich prospered and reaped the benefits of state-of-the-art health care, the poor languished in facilities more similar to developing nations than their American middle- and upper-class counterparts.

No policy operates in a vacuum or completely resolves any social problem, and public health policy is no exception. Herbert Simon (1997) proposed that policymakers are reduced to using bounded rationality as a means of resolving problems. Bounded rationality refers to the impossibility of making completely rational decisions because of the limits of time, human intellect, finances, and political will. Policy ventures, then, tend not to be the most rational choices between alternatives, but rather the first acceptable policy choice, which Simon labeled "satisficing."

Bounded rationality and satisficing place low status populations, such as poor African American children, at significant health risk since the political mechanisms that prompt governmental intervention are often triggered by the actions and perceived health threats to middle- and upper-income persons. Consequently, poor children remain in a perpetual state of vulnerability.

In the earliest days of public health in the United States (1890), the specters of poverty and race hindered the implementation of health initiatives. Drs. Hermann Biggs and T. Mitchell Prudden at the time envisioned clinics that would address any factor that was detrimental to health. Their efforts proved successful in the reduction of infectious disease cases prevalent at the time, however, not without battling racial inferiority theories. Implementation of infectious disease reduction strategies were difficult because of a prevailing belief that African Americans possessed inherently inferior immune systems. It was not until the White community was convinced of their personal risk associated with failure to address the health concerns rampant in the African American community that public health services became widespread (Garrett, 2000).

From those times to the present, racial tensions related to appropriate public health interventions persist. Since particularly in urban and rural settings the vast majority of the poor are also ethnic minorities, the distinctions between poverty and race fail to be made. As a result, public health advocates increasingly find themselves at odds with physicians and the general public since their policies embrace the notion that at the convergence of poverty and health the condition of disease usually arises and race in this context is inconsequential (Garrett, 2000).

Childhood lead poisoning distribution provides one example of the tension between public health agencies and the public. Early attempts of public health agencies to reduce the likelihood that children would be exposed to lead were complicated by misconceptions about the nature of lead poisoning in children. Lead poisoning was and continues to be considered largely a poor, inner-city minority problem (Needleman, 1992; Warren, 1997). Prior to the late 1960s, assurances had been published that two groups were most susceptible to lead poisoning: adults and poor children. Adults, working in lead-related industries, were susceptible by virtue of their occupational contact with lead. Poor, "backward" children that ate paint chips, a condition called pica, who were for the most part African American, were the second group. The term "backward' was prevalent in the 1920s to 1940s literature and was specifically used to describe poor African American children. This notion of two-tiered exposure persisted despite data collected in the 1960s and 1970s that reported that as many as 20–45% of the total number of tested children with toxic blood lead levels did not live in inner cities (Li-Fu, 1992).

Since the inception of formalized public health organizations in the United States, interventions have been mired in the realities of American politics, self-interest, and attitudes about poverty and racism (Garrett, 2000). Consequently, social exclusion and poverty have yielded an overrepresentation of poor African American children among the ranks of the suffering. It should be no surprise then that despite their good intentions, organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control, have failed to manage the complex networks required to narrow the health disadvantage faced by this group of America's children. Instead, since public health is funded and monitored by federal, state, and local governmental agencies, those most dependent upon services rendered by these agencies find themselves subject to political whims and trends, and the value-laden priorities of decision makers.

Part of the reason African Americans suffer disproportionately is because of the concentrated wealth in the United States. It has been reported that 1% of the American population controls 40–50% of the nation's financial resources (Kawachi & Wilkinson, 1999). One cause of depleted resources and political will to care for indigent persons comes from an increased demand for medical services by the rich (Waldmann, 1999). Another cause has been explained in a theoretical proposal advanced by Richard G. Wilkenson, the Relative Income Hypothesis (RIH) (Kawachi, Wilkinson, & Kennedy, 1999). This framework helps explain how the health prospects of poor African American children could decline in an era of unprecedented growth in the American economy.

The Relative Income Hypothesis

Public health policies and the analysis of those policies have quantified the direct correlation not only between health and poverty, but also the health consequences of income polarization between the rich and the poor. The Relative Income Hypothesis (RIH), developed by Richard G. Wilkinson in 1984, attempts to explain why some populations are more apt to suffer from the ills of poor health within nations whose wealth is polarized, such as is the case in the United States. This theory sheds light on how the health prospects for poor children in America are so dismal (Kawachi et al., 1999; Rainwater & Smeeding, 1997).

As articulated by Kawachi and colleagues (1999), the theory posits that an "individual's health is affected not only by their own level of income, but by the scale of inequality in society as a whole" (p. xvi). Restated, the wider the disparities in income within a nation's population, the greater the health differences. As the income gap widens, policy preferences tend to shift away from a more egalitarian health system to a more individualistic focus (Wilkinson, 1999). In what Wilkinson predicted would be an individualistic climate for policy interventions, taxes tend to be reduced, publicly supported programs tend to be cut or disbanded, and the poor find themselves a suffering island in a sea of prosperity.

According to the theory, at a time when a society's resources abound and could arguably afford to distribute resources to meet the health- and education-related needs of the poor, policies and services reflect the opposite trend. Theoretical presumptions of RIH can be validated with even a cursory evaluation of persistent barriers to health and well-being experienced by urban-dwelling, low-income African American children.

Consider as one RIH example the health costs of urban air pollution to poor children. According to the World Resources Institute (1999), while sources of air pollution may be different in developed and developing nations, poor urban children are at the greatest risk of the health consequences of poor air quality. Poor children, because of their weight, their rapid breathing patterns, and poor nutrition, tend to suffer the respiratory consequences of exposure, such as asthma and pneumonia, more severely.

The economically endowed (who are more apt to have a car than the poor) drive in and around cities to work, shop, and then retreat to the suburbs. Urban-dwelling children are left to breathe high concentrations of particulates and fumes that diminish respiratory function.

Funds earmarked for pollution reduction and treatment of respiratory illnesses of poor clients have not enjoyed increases commensurate with health risk. Instead, cities tend to invest in capital-intensive state-of-the-art medical equipment (found in hospitals that serve those with reliable health insurance as opposed to hospitals that serve indigent patients) and various tax incentives to lure upper-income individuals to relocate to urban centers (Bartlett et al., 1999; Waldman, 1999).

Another example of RIH can be found in the major reductions in funding suffered during the rapid wealth concentration years of former Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, Sr., from which public health agencies have never recovered. Reagan supported a decrease in public health funding and the structural shift of Medicaid funds to block grants and thus less prescriptive spending on behalf of the poor. Bush vetoed efforts to enhance federal fiscal support of health care and approved policies shifting control of public health to localities. Rising health care costs, privatization of health services, calls for individual responsibility, and changes in lifestyle were met with reductions in federal health assistance funding (Garrett, 2000). Lackluster intervention during the Clinton administration further eroded the health prospects of the poor, largely a result of welfare restructuring for families with children. These collective vetoes, structural adjustments, and their attendant funding implications left public health agencies serving communities with the greatest need with markedly reduced resources.

POOR HEALTH AND ITS EDUCATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Health as alluded to previously does not exist unto itself, but trickles into the educational capacity of children. As such, even short bouts of poverty in critical developmental stages can exact a high price. While genes do predispose children to certain traits and behaviors, the influence of environmental factors and health and social structures during periods of rapid neurological, cognitive, and emotional development promote or deter brain capacity(Jensen, 1998; Schettler, Stein, Reich, Valenti, & Wallinga, 2000).

Before birth, gestational development is influenced by maternal nutrition, toxic exposure, heredity, and other factors that potentially thwart normal development (Jensen, 1998; Wauben & Wainwright, 1999). Once born, a baby's rapidly developing brain continues to be heavily influenced by sensory, environmental, and nutritional experiences in the first years of life (Schettler et al., 2000; UNICEF, 2001; Wauben & Wainwright, 1999). It is important to remember that while the consequences detailed in this section pertain to all poor children, they relate disproportionately to African American children given their overrepresentation in the ranks of the poor (Foster & Furstenberg, 1999).

The vulnerability of children is exhibited by the rates of disease and death as compared to upper-income children. Poor children are three times more likely to die prematurely, five times more likely to die from infectious diseases or parasitically induced diseases, and six times as inclined to expire from miscellaneous diseases such as asthma (Sherman, 1998). While these outcomes of poverty and those noted below are pervasive, each child's prognosis is idiosyncratic depending upon many factors including duration of poverty, timing and duration of toxic exposure, weight, and timing and duration of malnutrition.

Malnutrition and exposure to neurotoxicants (chemicals that hinder the normal brain and neurological maturation of children) are two factors that can convert a "normal" child into a youngster with sustained cognitive, emotional, and behavioral deficits (Bartlett et al., 1999; Guo & Harris, 2000). Some of the most common neurotoxicants are lead, mercury, dioxins, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) (Schettler et al., 2000).

Malnutrition

One of the most insipid thieves of childhood potential is malnutrition. Though not an inclusive list, Table 6.3 reflects some of the consequences of infant and childhood malnutrition that are severe and enduring.

Table 6.3. Health and Educational Consequences of Malnutrition (Mendez & Adair, 1999; Wauben & Wainwright, 1999; World Resources Institute, 1999; Zander, 1989)

Source of Deprivation	*Health Consequence*	*Potential Educational Consequence*
Malnutrition	• More susceptible to infection and chronic diseases • Stunted growth • Hair loss • Skin disorders • Impaired central nervous system functioning	• Apathy, low motivation to learn • Shorter attention span • Motor impairment • Increased absenteeism • Behavioral problems • Learning and physical disabilities • Reduced IQ • Poor memory

The absence of a balanced diet has a profound affect on brain and physical growth as well as educational capacity. Proteins and carbohydrates facilitate the synthesis of serotonin, which has links to behaviors and spatial memory performance. Fatty acids are linked to memory functions. Deficits in zinc may result in impaired learning, reduced activity, and poor memory. Iron deficiencies alone have been associated with cognitive deficits, reduced IQ, and motor impairment. Anemia (inadequacies in iron) has also been linked to an increased propensity to absorb lead (Wauben & Wainwright, 1999).

Even if children live beyond the age of 4, malnutrition, low birth weight, and exposure to infectious diseases can result in chronic illnesses that hinder educational attainment. These limits are not necessarily the result of diminished intellectual capacity, but sometimes result from the limits they place on the activity and attendance of children in school. Chronic asthma is one such example that forces children to miss many days of instruction (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2000).

Malnutrition as a function of economic distress pervades every aspect of a child's potential. Table 6.3 presents just a few of the many potentially disabling conditions associated with childhood hunger. Distractions rooted in malnutrition, chronic pain, and/or disease make it difficult for children to concentrate or perform at the same level as upper-income children (Fujiura & Yamaki, 2000; Payne & Biddle, 1999).

Exposure to Neurotoxicants

Poverty also makes children more susceptible to environmental toxins or neurotoxicants by virtue of their neighborhood locations and the conditions of their homes. Developmental neurotoxicants, noted in Table 6.4, reflect some of the health and educational consequences associated with childhood poisoning.

Table 6.4. Health and Educational Consequences of Neurotoxicant Exposure (Richardson, 1999; Schettler et al., 2000)

Source of Deprivation	*Health Consequence*	*Potential Educational Consequence*
Neurotoxicant Exposure (dioxins, mercury, lead, PCBs)	• Thyroid dysfunction • Damaged neurological pathways • Impaired visual-motor and visual-spatial integration • Retardation • Language impairment	• Reading disabilities • Behavior problems • Reduced IQ • Increased probability of dropping out of school • Poor attention spans, hyperactivity • Reduced memory capacity • Learning disabilities

How and what children learn, in addition to their ability to process information, is directly influenced by neurological development and/or hindrances to development (Schettler et al., 2000). Children already bear the burden of toxic exposure differently than adults by virtue of their weight and developmental stages. For example, between birth and age 4, brain development directs binocular vision, emotional control, habitual ways of responding, language, and cognitive recognition of symbols (UNICEF, 2001). Chemical interference with development during this period can cause permanent and irreversible neurological damage and subsequently long-term functional deficits evident in educational settings. Poverty multiplies disadvantage because it increases the likelihood that children will be exposed to neurotoxicants that are absorbed more readily and do more damage in light of nutrient deficits (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, 2001; Schettler et al., 2000), one such example being lead poisoning.

As has been the case with the other health-related challenges of poverty, lead poisoning cases are not equally distributed throughout the population. Poor youngsters between the ages of 1 and 4 are four times more likely to become poisoned than their upper-income counterparts. Despite over 20 years of federal legislation designed to reduced lead as an environmental risk to poor children in general and poor African American children in particular, 20% of African American children between the ages of 1 and 5 are believed to be poisoned by lead (Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction and Financing Task Force, 1995).

Since there may be years between exposure and the latent outcomes of neurotoxicant exposure, it is difficult to draw cause-and-effect relationships in the traditional scientific sense. For example, there might be multiple causation, that is, interaction between chemicals, environmental and genetic factors, that result in reduced intellectual capacity. However, there have been decades of research that link lead to negative cognitive, behavioral, and learning consequences in children (Richardson, 1999; Schettler et al., 2000).

Deficits created by lead exposure, whether cognitive or behavioral, make it more difficult for children to succeed in school. Children may have difficulty coping academically and behaviorally in traditional school settings because of short attention spans, irritability, restlessness, and low frustration thresholds, which could have been caused by lead toxicity. Academic-related difficulties include reading disabilities, lower IQ, speech and language disabilities, and unremarkably, dropout rates are seven times higher for lead-poisoned youth than other groups of students (Richardson, 1999).

As noted earlier, race and class have historically been linked to lead poisoning, which directly and indirectly influences the political will to resolve the problems associated with exposure. According to Barbara Berney (1993), "much of the task of the last 20 years of lead epidemiology has been to show that lead exposure and absorption cause rather than result from neurobehavioral problems" (p. 17). Consequences of poisoning are even more tragic because screening protocols that require doctors serving Medicaid patients to test regularly for lead in urban centers are rarely enforced by the CDC (Richardson, 1999). Despite incident patterns of childhood lead poisoning, toxicity-related behavioral disorders and learning difficulties continue to be coded as personal and familial deficits. Once again, economically disadvantaged children find themselves disproportionately exposed, experiencing educational consequences tied to poverty, health, and race (Kraft & Scheberle, 1995; Richardson, 1999).

Chemical exposure and nutritional deficits clearly hinder the delicate and intricate developmental processes that occur from conception to early childhood. Depending upon the type and timing of interference with the normal ordered process of growth, youngsters' life chances can be severely limited or worse, result in premature mortality. In the cases of both malnutrition and neurotoxicant exposure, timing is everything. Depending upon the time and concentration of exposure and hunger, results will vary. This explains why similar living conditions might affect children of varying ages differently.

When poverty and race converge, low-income African American children fare worse on virtually every health and toxic exposure indices when compared to Whites, suffering what some experts have termed extreme health disadvantage. This handicap is relative not only to Whites but also Hispanics and Native Americans. Health disadvantages between African Americans and other groups, as per former-President Clinton's Initiative on Race, are largely a function of income- and race-based discrimination (Council of Economic Advisors, 1998).

High Poverty Schools and the Children They Serve

Exacerbating the dilemmas of poor, sickly African American children are the dismal schools they attend. Table 6.5 articulates just a few of the many challenges facing children and the institutions charged with their education.

Table 6.5. High Poverty Schools and Student Consequences (Cuomo, 1998; Fujiura & Yamaki, 2000; Payne & Biddle, 1999; National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997)

Source of Deprivation	*School-based Issues*	*Student Educational Consequences*
Poverty	Poor minorities are more likely than Whites to: • Attend schools serving high populations of poor students • Have the fewest financial resources • Have math and science taught by teachers uncertified in those disciplines • Have fewer gifted and talented and after-school enrichment programs • Pay lower teacher salaries than schools serving upper-income children	• Low graduation rates • Lower basic achievement as measured by standardized tests • Higher absenteeism • Limited accelerated course offerings • Increased likelihood of physical and learning disabilities • Higher incidents of misbehavior and/or violent outbursts

Poor children are liable to attend schools with high concentrations of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, the national indices for child poverty in schools. In the case of African American children, of the nearly 40% that subsist in poverty, most find themselves living in poor neighborhoods (Fajiura & Yamaki, 2000; Foster & Furstenberg, 1999).

Thus, the problems associated with economically distressed communities, such as high unemployment or underemployment, inadequate public services, dilapidated housing starts, and concentrations of environmental toxins, exacerbate the predicament of these children, multiplying disadvantage (Foster & Furstenberg, 1999; Guo & Harris, 2000). Since most African American children live in urban centers or rural southeastern communities, they are also inclined to attend underfunded schools with uncertified, underpaid teachers who have few resources to meet complex educational needs. Economically depressed communities do not command the requisite tax base to adequately support children in need of the most services that mitigate the educational ramifications of poverty (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

Further erosion of educational potential results from the probability that teachers and administrators will use exhibited behaviors and deficits to segregate students into educational tracks. However, as noted in Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 many of the education-related consequences of malnutrition and environmental poisoning signal a need for more comprehensive intervention on behalf of affected children. In other words, placing children in special education classes because of learning disabilities may address some of the symptoms of malnutrition, but this intervention does nothing to address the root cause of education-related problems.

It should be no surprise that abysmal graduation rates, low performance on standardized tests, and high incidents of inappropriate behavior are commonplace in schools serving primarily poor populations. These educational settings, because of fiscal constraints and institutionalized conceptions about the potential of poor children, result unremarkably in self-fulfilling prophecies of underachievement.

Despite these dismal health-related projections, medical and public health studies have yielded very interesting conclusions that have direct implications relative to the performance of African American children in schools. Based on the findings of these reports, there is evidence that the well-documented overrepresentation of African American children as educational underachievers is not rooted in racial or ethnic genetic inferiority, but rather in the overrepresentation of African American children in the category of the poor and unhealthy (Fujiura & Yamaki, 2000; Guo & Harris, 2000; Payne & Biddle, 1999). Yet rarely does educational literature embrace the serious and complex interactions between health, poverty, and African American achievement.

Perhaps a more appropriate question to pursue relative to the health and educational prospects of poor children lies in the value society places on these youngsters. Unfortunately, as Jonathan Kozol (2001) aptly reflects, assigning "investment value" to poor children is problematic in that those values rise and fall with political and public opinion. Institutional barriers to the health of economically deprived African American children yields dismaying evidence that the social value placed on this particular group of youth is at best temporal and at worst nonexistent.

CONCLUSION: BATTLING FOR SURVIVAL

The first wealth is health.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson (cited in McWilliams, 1996, p. 119)

As exhibited by this chapter, African American children find themselves uniquely sensitive and vulnerable to public health policy initiatives, which have resulted in a battle for survival despite American economic prosperity. Further, long before a child attends their first day of school, health deprivation can exact a high toll on educational capacity. As the raw numbers of poor children in certain racial and ethnic groups have declined over the last 30 years, African American children as a percent of the total poor have conversely increased. America's child poverty distribution dilemma is further complicated by health inequalities that fall along lines of race and class (Kawachi et al., 1999). As a result of the discussion provided, childhood health disparities should be no surprise.

The Relative Income Hypothesis (RIH) is valuable in predicting the relationship between income disparity and health. Income and funding disparities, along with political trends as predicted by RIH, do appear to shift focus from egalitarian interventions to more individualistic approaches. However, income alone does not explain the marked differences between the health of African American and White children. Average deaths among all children between the ages of 1 and 4 decreased from 1997 to 1998 (from 36 to 34 deaths per 100,000, respectively). Conversely, in the African American community, deaths from all income levels in this category rose slightly to 61 of 100,000 children in this same age group (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2000). Part of the explanation of this phenomenon is the persistent lag of African American income and wealth behind Whites with comparable education and employment (Office of Minority Health, 2000). Even Wilkenson (1999) admits that public sentiment fails to value poor children because of preconceived notions about the root causes of poverty.

Reduced to economic calculations, the costs of childhood poverty have been estimated to exceed $26 billion, but dollars and cents cannot adequately assess the long-term consequences of childhood deprivation. Costs associated with child poverty are not confined to lost productivity but rather extend to educational institutions (for remedial and special education services) and health care facilities (for the increased costs of treating chronically ill children), to name just two examples (Sherman, 1998). Effective intervention strategies that mitigate the effects of poverty in the African American community are good strategies for all of America's children. Adequate prenatal care, well-baby checkups and immunizations, balanced diets, and reduced exposure to environmental toxins benefit not only poor children and their families but also society at large. Unfortunately, even the tendency to identify children as purely cost–benefit variables further relegates poor children to the ranks of the vulnerable, at the mercy of the wealthy and powerful as opposed to valuable in their own right.

One chapter could not possibly recount the minimally successful decades of public health initiatives and the nexus between health and educational potential. However, this chapter adds to a growing body of research that substantiates the need to consider the interdependence of health, race, and class on educational attainment and opportunity. Restated, "to discount racism as a potential contributor to disparities in health by race and ethnicity is to ignore well-established social history" (Northridge & Shepard, 1997, p. 730).

Investing in the health and well-being of all of America's children, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words, would be an investment in the first and most critical wealth. Barriers to health will persist in the absence of substantive political funding and attitudinal shifts. Failure to purposefully and effectively address the health concerns of economically disadvantaged African American children will perpetuate what Laurie Garrett (2000) called "[the] lasting and shameful theme of U.S. public health" (p. 306). If current trends continue, future generations of poor African American children are destined to repeat the fate of their predecessors as they battle before birth the institutionalized barriers to health.

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CHAPTER 7

AFRICAN AMERICAN VIOLENCE EXPOSURE

An Emerging Health Issue

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INTRODUCTION

On May 30, 1921, a young Black male was riding on an elevator with a White female elevator operator, who without evidence subsequently accused him of physically assaulting her. He was arrested the next day and ultimately a street confrontation emerged between armed Blacks and Whites. During

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Surmounting All Odds, pages 147–173
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the 24-hour riot, more than 35 blocks of property were destroyed, more than 800 people incurred injury, and more than 300 lives were lost. In a similar expression of community discontent and frustration, violence and riots were widespread particularly on the West and South sides of Chicago in the early days of April 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. Lack of social change and responsiveness to the needs of the American community were addressed in a public arena manifested in violence.

This response has continued today. More recently (April 2001), following the death of an unarmed 19-year-old African American male, three days of riots erupted with hundreds of young African American males arrested for their violent expression of social discontent. Somehow we seem to have forgotten or misplaced the idea that violence has been used as a tool to communicate discontent, oppression, and inequality throughout the history of the world. Civilizations throughout Europe and more recently North America have been oppressed, but have often risen violently in their own defense to redistribute wealth, influence, and access. Yet we find it inconceivable that violence in the lives of African American families and their youth in the United States are of epidemic proportions. In the context of our human past, the question remains: Is current violence among African Americans an expression of their discontent with inequality, the lack of access to wealth and influence (powerlessness), or something else? Because this issue has not been the primary focus of attention or intervention, it is almost impossible to discern the answer from the current scientific literature. Because of the tremendous costs of violence to both life and the health care system, we must begin the process of understanding the causes and mechanisms of violence in the African American community and, most importantly, an appropriate conceptualization of violence as a health care issue. In many respects it is reprehensible that we are just learning that ignoring violence in the African American community will ultimately threaten the public health of all citizens given its drain on the health care system in an environment of decreasing health care resources.

The basic premise of this chapter is that the effects of violence are ecological, and thus, its cost is not a "simple" computation of incidence and prevalence. Multiple factors and the nature of their relationships create an environment conducive to the existence and perpetuation of inequity (Schulman et al., 1999) and ultimately violence. These inequities have traditionally been measured as consequences (Berkowitz, Lapinski, Wein, & Lee, 1992; Kessler & Neighbors, 1986; Nickens, 1995), but only rarely as the underlying force that drives morbidity and mortality rates for African Americans (Nightingale et al., 1990; Saab et al., 1997).

To affect the lives of large aggregates of African American youth and their families, active policy guidance must move beyond purely descriptive models. Greater explanatory power can be achieved by first conceding that patterns among societal-level factors for African American families are experienced differently than for Anglo-Americans. We must realize that each group exists functionally, often in dissimilar ecologies. Neither the nature nor the scope of violence witnessed in the lives of African Americans in the United States can be properly addressed without considering how both violence and its precursors are integrally woven, differently, into the fabric of the *American communities* they experience. Without the reconceptualization that radically different strategies are needed to address the differences in their physical, psychological, social, and economic environments, social policies will continue in the direction of disadvantage for African Americans and will continue to perpetuate poverty, violence, and negative health outcomes.

Second, even more profound is the paucity of studies that evaluate the influence of inequity and poverty on violence and healthcare (Center for the Advancement of Health, 1998). Yet poverty and inequity are not regarded as manifestations of violence. To change an environment conducive to violence in the African American community, we must understand that the social and psychological dynamics of the African American community are manifestations of a history and context. Simply stated, a real and perceived sense of powerlessness and inequality of opportunity significantly influences behavior. It is not that individual characteristics are not important causes of injury, death, and long-term morbidity, rather that for many, the context of their race is. Individuals within a deprived population, as the direct result of injury and health neglect, suffer often from many years of diminished capacity, reduced quality of life, and lowered self-esteem.

Finally, if we plan to address violence and its impact on the health care system, we must increase our ability to develop mechanisms for social change that target individual and group empowerment and their access to individual fulfillment. Once the etiology of violence is reconceptualized, in the context of its connections to the life of communities in which individuals reside, we can then begin to better understand the impact of violence and its exposure as a health care issue.

VIOLENCE: A RECONCEPTUALIZATION

Each of these notions concerns violence at the subpopulation level as an outcome. As an expression, what is apparent is the idea of race-as-context. The utility of race as an explanation of crimes of violence is limited unless one embraces both the nature and scope of variables that not only motivate and control individual behavior, but also provide a medium for occurrence. Race is experienced on biological, psychological, and societal levels, but is too often a proxy for poverty, social inequity, and a myriad of other factors. Although the relations between individual social disadvantage and morbidity and mortality are highly differentiated across sociodemographic groups in the United States, implicit is the inference of context. Middle and lower classes are less likely to receive preventive services, more likely to experience differences in treatment once they are in the healthcare system (Schulman et al., 1999). Nor the poor, who are disproportionately African American, Hispanic, and Native American, are likely to have equal access to health care (McLoyd, 1990).

For African Americans, these patterns of inequity can be further complicated by racial discrimination and intricate interactions with socioeconomic opportunities and residential environments. Racism too often deprives economic advancement and the attainment of wealth (resources). Conversely, the lack of economic opportunities often inhibits upward mobility and escape from impoverished living conditions. For years, scientists have observed that marked variations in social and economic systems contribute to the etiology of violence and its consequences. It has been widely acknowledged that both the underlying causes and the effects are multifaceted. Yet, public concern for the health of African American adolescents remains couched fundamentally in terms of measuring the incidence and prevalence of their morbidity and mortality rather than practicing preventative strategies.

Our view holds that it is society's lack of willingness to acknowledge, and thereby effectively respond to the web-fashioned context of "scarcity and inequality," that creates an environment conducive to violence. It is this tragedy that functions as the carrier of powerlessness, both to breed and thereby to continue maladaptive and sociopathogenic structural mechanisms that ultimately serve to undergird the lives of many African American youth. Our approach to remediation is twofold.

First, it is our hypothesis that the health status of large aggregates of African American youth is affected by how the larger psychological, social, and behavioral context invests in its communities, and thereby provides a foundation from which recurring patterns of risk factors derive and express differential life circumstances. Second, the health context as defined by one's perception of the utility of the health care system for them may be manifest from powerlessness. When the systems-level mechanisms for wellness (hospitals, clinics, preventative care, etc.) are perceived as unattainable, and consequently the focus on wellness is diminished, violence may flourish. Several factors thus may influence the individual-level manifestation of violence: (1) the individual with respect to interruptions to healthy growth and development; (2) societal, in terms of Medicaid usage patterns; (3) cultural, as evidenced by impoverished communities as a function of racial differences within the learning context; and (4) local, indicated by emergency room data and cost to a regional facility. Our choice in starting point for discussion is somewhat arbitrary. The nature of violence, costs, and whose responsibilities are to bear them each remain matters of definition and policy debate. On the other hand, given the magnitude of violence experienced within the African American community, that these costs arise we believe are fundamentally symptomatic of its etiology: Race for African Americans is context, and it reflects a chronic disenfranchisement from a social system of resources and access afforded to majority populations. For purposes of this chapter, we leave much of the specific translation of injury and medical care dollar costs to medical economists. We also make no distinction between Black Americans and African Americans, and thus, these terms are used interchangeably. Finally, we discuss the implications of violence as a health care issue and make recommendations for more productive interventions.

THE HEALTH CONTEXT: MANIFESTATIONS OF SENSE OF POWERLESSNESS

Disruptions to Growth and Development

Few estimates fully disaggregate "costs of violence" by race, or describe how contexts respond to racial and ethnic sub-populations. For some, the implications of this omission should be fairly obvious. The underling presumption is that "all" American families face the same or a similar ecological landscape of experiences and opportunities to the extent that one model of health and human services usage is believed, and thereby responds to fit the needs of "all." We find that even without definitive explication of what race is, it is clear that within the United States two very different ecological landscapes—*that ready supply of social and psychological structures and mechanisms, in addition to the natural*—with respect human health exist.

During the past 50 years Black Americans have experienced patterns of death rates that result from internal and external causes, with the exception of unintentional injuries, motor vehicle-related injuries, or suicide, at one and one half to four times those of White America (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000a). Victimization rates on all serious crimes tend to be more than 25% greater than for White Americans. Of the murder victims under 18 years of age, a disproportionate number tend to be African American (i.e., approximately 46.7%; U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

However, perhaps even more telling of human capital lost, as a broad measure of health and function, are the activity limitations to healthy growth and development-imposed physical injuries (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999a). The number of annual bed days due to injuries is 24.7 for African American youth under 18 years of age. This is in strong contrast to only 10.2 days for similar aged non-Hispanic Whites. Similar patterns are evident for the percentage of school-loss days due to injuries. Although 16% of the people enrolled in schools in the United States are African American, they represent approximately 35% of the number of days lost for those between the ages of 5–17 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999c).

Equally compelling are the "apparent strains" experienced by parents given their capacity to ensure proper and safe environs for their children or themselves (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999b). Based on the number of restricted activity days per 100 persons per year, the ratio for children under 18 years of age that are injured in the street or highway between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites involving a motor vehicle is more than two to one (18.1 vs. 11.3). Similarly, the number of restricted activity days involving persons over 18 years of age between African American adults and their White counterparts is also more than two to one (244.1 vs. 116.9).

Clearly, the nature of violence operates in many and often multiple forms. However, their effects are incontrovertible: It is differentially expressed at the racial group level of contexts.

Medicaid Expenditures

Medicaid is the third largest health insurer in the United States (Okunade, 1998). In North Carolina, for example, it is a $6 billion industry. From 1993 to 1999, Medicaid has changed its expansion of coverage from 28.3 to 41.3 million lives and a shift in responsibility from the federal to the state governments (Iglehart, 1999). With this shift of responsibility the states will now have the responsibility to set up their own standards of eligibility; determine the type, amount, duration, and scope of covered services; establish the rate of payment for service; and administer their own programs (Iglehart, 1999).

Given that the poor, who are disproportionately represented among racial and ethnic minorities, often do not have equal access to health care, educational, or criminal justice systems, differential patterns of Medicaid usage can be used as another indication of human capital costs of different levels of group powerlessness. As a percentage of population, approximately 20% of African Americans access this health care coverage versus 7% of Whites (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999d).

Underinsured and Uninsured Populations

Lack of access to health care such as Medicaid is a significant factor in the understanding of health outcomes for the African American community. Although difficult to disentangle, it is potentially related to the number of poor young persons who might witness violence or experience neglect or abuse. For example, if related to repeated emergency room visits, African American youth exhibit a higher percentage of two or more visits, approximately 7.8% of African American youth between the ages of 6 and 17, in contrast to 5.4 of Whites (U.S. Department of Heath & Human Services, 2000d).

Some have estimated that for everyone who dies from violence at least 100 people are nonfatally injured. The potential of the poor to witness violence or become neglected or abused is enormous (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000c). When the victim is African American and male between the ages of 15 and 25, the rate per 100,000 is approximately 110.8, whereas for similar ages in Whites the rate is 13.1. Between the ages of 1 to 4 years the rates are 4.8 for Blacks versus 1.2 for Whites. Similar contrasts in patterns are evident for females. For ages 15 to 24, approximately 13.5 and 3.1 per 100,000, Black and White respectively; or ages 1 to 14, 3.5 and 1.0 per 100,000.

Deaths due to firearm-related injuries evidence similar patterns of discrepancies between Blacks and Whites (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2000b). In African American males between the ages of 15 and 25, the rate is approximately 117.6 per 100,000, whereas 24.9 for Whites. For females, it is approximately 10.9 and 3.7, Black and White respectively.

Again, it is evident that these differences when combined create a significant expression of powerlessness. To the extent large aggregates of individuals and their families—*at the level of race or ethnicity*—are unable to provide for health and well being, it is likely that they are exposed to societal-level influences that have negative direct effects on the everyday experience of life.

The Health Consequences of Impoverished Communities

Our analyses of human behavior using structural equation modeling techniques based on a cultural and ecological systems framework indicate that what happens in the lives of racial and ethnic groups is shaped in part by factors that are linked to the wider political economy (Killough, Drewes, & Edwards, 2000; Killough, Edwards, Drewes, Bennett, & Merritt, 2000; Killough, Swan, Scales, & Edwards, 2000). As violence has been associated with socioeconomic status, residential instability, and education outcomes, we show in this section how the socialization context of American youth and their families consists of both adaptive and maladaptive influences, and ultimately functions as an underlying, stable, but coherently expressed set of experiences. The results describe statistically not only the predictability of this structural level of experience, but how societal level factors are differentially expressed between African American families and their youth and the extent to which they are functionally nonequivalent. Combined, the ultimate result remains the same: A chronic disenfranchisement from a social system of resources and access afforded to majority populations.

THE COLLECTIVE EFFICACY OF THE RACE: "THE LEARNING CONTEXT"

This investigation was designed to measure statistically the causal relations among societal level factors—*their patterns of direct and indirect influences*—as underlying factor structures capable of inducing observable psychological, social, and behavioral outcomes as a single unified systems analytic framework (Killough et al., 2000). Thus, rather than focusing on the individual level, the racial level as a differentiated but unified and multidimensional learning context frames the object of inquiry.

Conceptually, this enables "uncovering" where the socialization context for African and Anglo-American youth and their families derive, proximally, and how adaptive and maladaptive patterns of influences ultimately function as an underlying stable, but coherently expressed set of patterns of experiences. Theoretically, this defines the "collective efficacy" race. Empirically, this would also serve to frame both the nature and the scope of the learning context as a single unitary, albeit differentiated structure, functional as a "constellation of experience." Explanatory power, at this level, is essential for understanding how societal level factors are related differentially, both systemically and systematically to the "context of race" in the United States. Thus, how distinctively minority and majority racial groups contrast could be interpreted as an expression of their struggle, power or powerlessness, social enfranchisement or disenfranchisement, as a precursor to violence.

Factors examined were peer, neighborhood, general family contexts, and parent education attainment, theorized as exogenous risk factors; school experiences, family academically oriented intentions and behaviors, theorized as mediating protective factors; and parents' perceptions of their students' academic grade performance, theorized as the final endogenous outcome measure of academic performance. We consider these factors appropriate, fundamentally, because of the support in the academic literature, and if negative or an overall pattern of risk systemically, they would likely translate into poor life chances for employment, income, and social and political participation at the group level.

In this manner, for example, neighborhood social and psychological capital, and social control; parental efficacy as change agents in the lives of their children; and enabling school experiences, and so on, linked to these factors as indicators systemically, of a racial group sense of cohesion or "collective efficacy."

The Model

Specifically, we theorized that recurring patterns of psychological, social, and behavioral outcomes are induced by multiple contexts, but sustained as a single constellation of experience, ergo, the African American, or White American racial group experience. The data set was drawn from the *Survey of Parents and Children* (1990) made available from the Inter-University Consortium for Political Social Science Research. We selected this database because it provided a national sample of potential antecedent variables, of which many were supported by much of the education achievement literature. The idea was to use structural equation modeling techniques, as an *underlying construct* analysis technique, to tie people, events, and situations together in a meaningful manner that was measurable as stable relationships (Killough, Drewes, & Edwards, 2000). This would enable structural comparisons as human systems between of African American families and their White American counter parts for cross-cultural differences. Data screening and cleaning resulted in the selection of a data set consisting of 27 variables for each group based on a sample of 193 White families and 117 Black families (see Appendix). To ensure that the reduced sample did not differ from the full sample, we compared the reduced and full samples on selected demographic characteristics. No significant differences were obtained.

THE RESULTS

Three distinct patterns combined to indicate "racial group collective efficacy." The first pattern refers to theoretical evidence indicative of human *systems-like* behavior. The second refers to empirical evidence of different patterns of risk and protective factors. The third pattern also refers empirical evidence, but is interpreted further as two distinct patterns of function.

Pattern 1: The Occurrence, Theoretically and Empirically, of Well-Behaved Systems-Like Behavior

The first set of analyses indicated that sets of patterns of experiences recurred, theoretically, as a well-behaved systems-like constellation for both racial groups. First, analysis based on traditionally used model fit indices indicated *good model fit* (Bollen, 1989). For African American and American White family samples, all model fit indices were acceptable; respectively, model fit indices and their magnitudes were: Goodness of Fit Index, 0.9378, 0.9820; Root Mean Square Residual, 0.131, 0.0896; chi-square 47.2405, df = 46, Prob > chi = 0.4217; 12.1769, df = 7, Prob > chi = 0.0949. These indices of overall "model fit" were an indication that each group functioned as a coherent system that could be interpreted as a "unified constellation" of observed and unobserved psychological, social, and behavioral experiences.

Second, both models explained more than 20% of the variance in the behavior of academic performance: 20.66% for using the African American sample, and 36.80% for the White American sample. This was an indication that the "constellation of experience" itself as a societal level structure could account empirically for a "reasonably valid" amount of variability in academically related outcomes, given the national basis of the data set along with its broadness of scope and nature.

Third, the model derived from one group (i.e., constellation of experience) was unable to "fit" the model (i.e., constellation of experience) of the other. This was an indication that the socialization context, as a constellation of experience with respect to recurring patterns of everyday experiences between African American families and the youth and their White American counterparts, were functionally nonequivalent empirically, and thereby could be interpreted as culturally distinct.

Pattern 2: Two Very Different Patterns of Risk and Protection

The second set of analyses consisted of model contrasts (Figures 7.1 and 7.2). Two very different patterns of risk and protective factors were evident, empirically, between African American and White American families. For ease of interpretation, all coefficients are in standardized form; solid straight lines indicate statistically significant *systematic* influences in terms of direction (i.e., a singled-ended arrow) and magnitude; dashed lines indicate *systemic structural recurrence-only* (i.e., a recurring structure, but exhibiting nonsignificant influence within the racial group's constellation of experience); absence of lines indicate the *nonoccurrence* as structure within the racial group's constellation of experience; and curved lines indicate mutual correlated influence (i.e., a two-ended arrow) between structures (i.e., within the racial group's constellation of experience). As shown by Figures 7.1 and 7.2, the learning context consisted of different patterns of risk and protective factors for African American families and their youth (Figure 7.1) relative to their White American counterparts (Figure 7.1).

For Whites, two risk structures recur systematically, represented by three observed variables (see Appendix for variable descriptions). First, a societal underlying "neighborhood risk factor" anchored by psychological capital (v1n, –.70; i.e., "neighborhood global evaluations by parents as a good place to raise children"), and problems of social organization and social control (v2n, +0.49); conveyed as two, statistically significant negative paths of direct influences, and thus interpreted as risks or disabling influences (solid lines, standardized coefficients: –0.06, and –0.33). Second, a societal level of structure observed as "family efficacy beliefs" (v3f, "parental beliefs that they can act as change agents in solving teen problems"). This structure was interpreted as psychological capital, but disabling given its conveyance of a statistically significant negative path of influence (solid line, –0.14).

Whereas, for African American families, three rather than two societal risk structures were evident, indicated by five observed variables: First, peer "delinquency behaviors" observed as an indication of peer-level norms (variable, v3p), interpreted as a negative, systemic recurring-only structure, given by its nonsignificant path of influence (dashed line, –0.01). Second, an underlying "neighborhood-level systemic recurring-only structure," indicated by three (v1n = –0.59, v2n = +0.73, v6n = +0.88) rather than two recurring patterns of observed experiences (v1n and v2n). For this racial group this structure was an indication of "lack of neighborhood-level economic opportunity and stability," anchored by parent reports of problems with crime and violence, abandon or run-down buildings, and many people who cannot find jobs (v6n). Furthermore, it was also interpreted as potentially disabling, given the negative direction of effect (dashed line, +0.08). Third, a systemic recurring-only observed experience reported by students of their being able to talk with their mothers when things bothered them (v6b), interpreted as a "family academically oriented behavior". This behavioral involvement was an indication of social capital, but interpreted as a negative systemic recurring-only structure, also potentially given by its non-significant path of influence (dashed line, –0.04).

With respect to protective factors, patterns are again striking in terms of similarities and differences. Overall, for both groups three protective societal structures are evident, but indicated by different sets of observed experiences: three for Whites, but six for African Americans. Similarly, for both racial groups, increased levels of "education attainment" (v6f), as an indication of human capital, exerted a systemically experienced positive influence

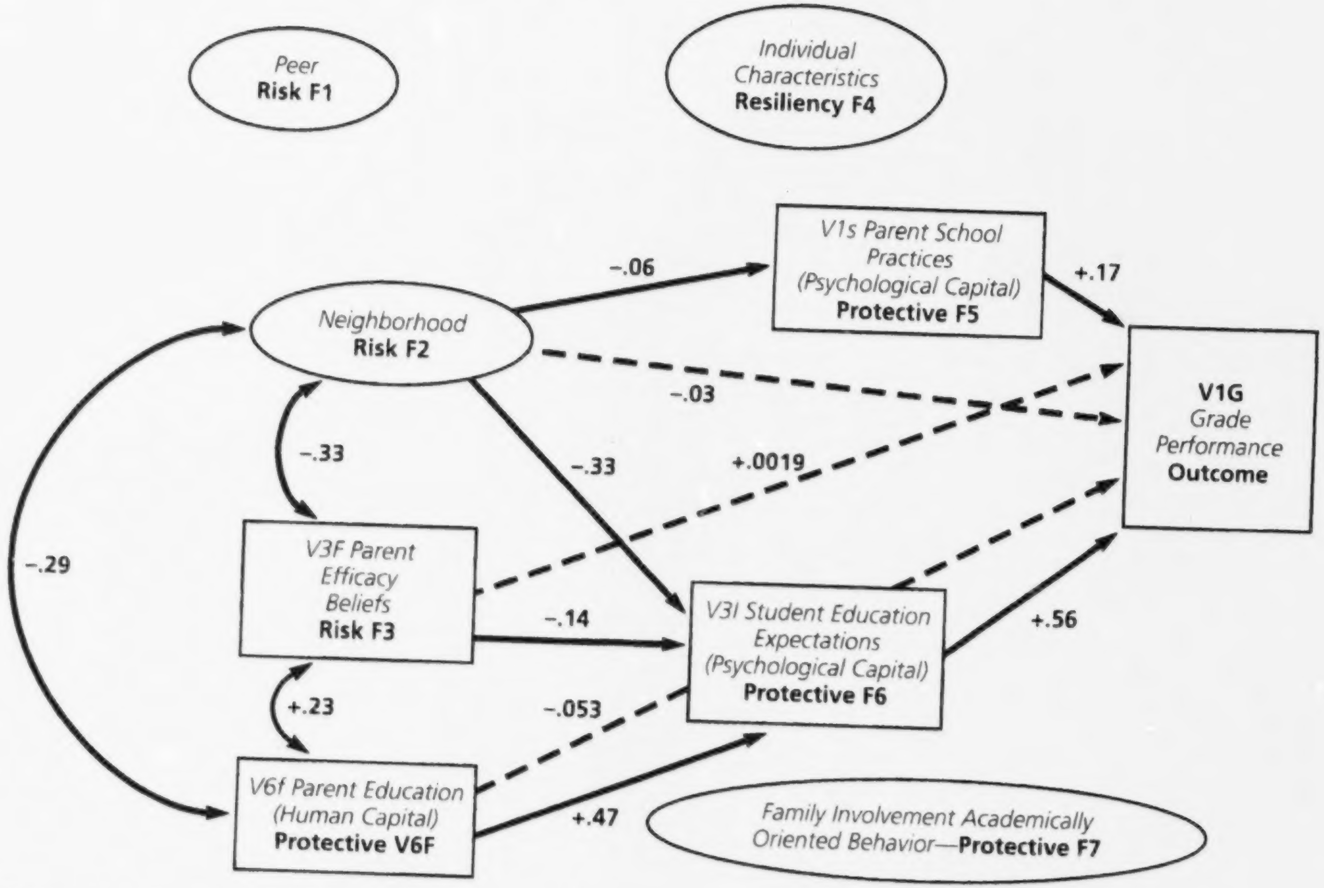
Peer
Risk F1
Individual
Characteristics
Resiliency F4
V1s Parent School
Practices
(Psychological Capital)
Protective F5
+.17
-.06
Neighborhood
Risk F2
-.03
V1G
Grade
Performance
Outcome
-.33
-.33
+.0019
-.29
V3F Parent
Efficacy
Beliefs
Risk F3
-.14
V3I Student Education
Expectations
(Psychological Capital)
Protective F6
+.56
+.23
-.053
V6f Parent Education
(Human Capital)
Protective V6F
+.47
Family Involvement Academically
Oriented Behavior—Protective F7

Figure 7.1. American White families' psychosocial context

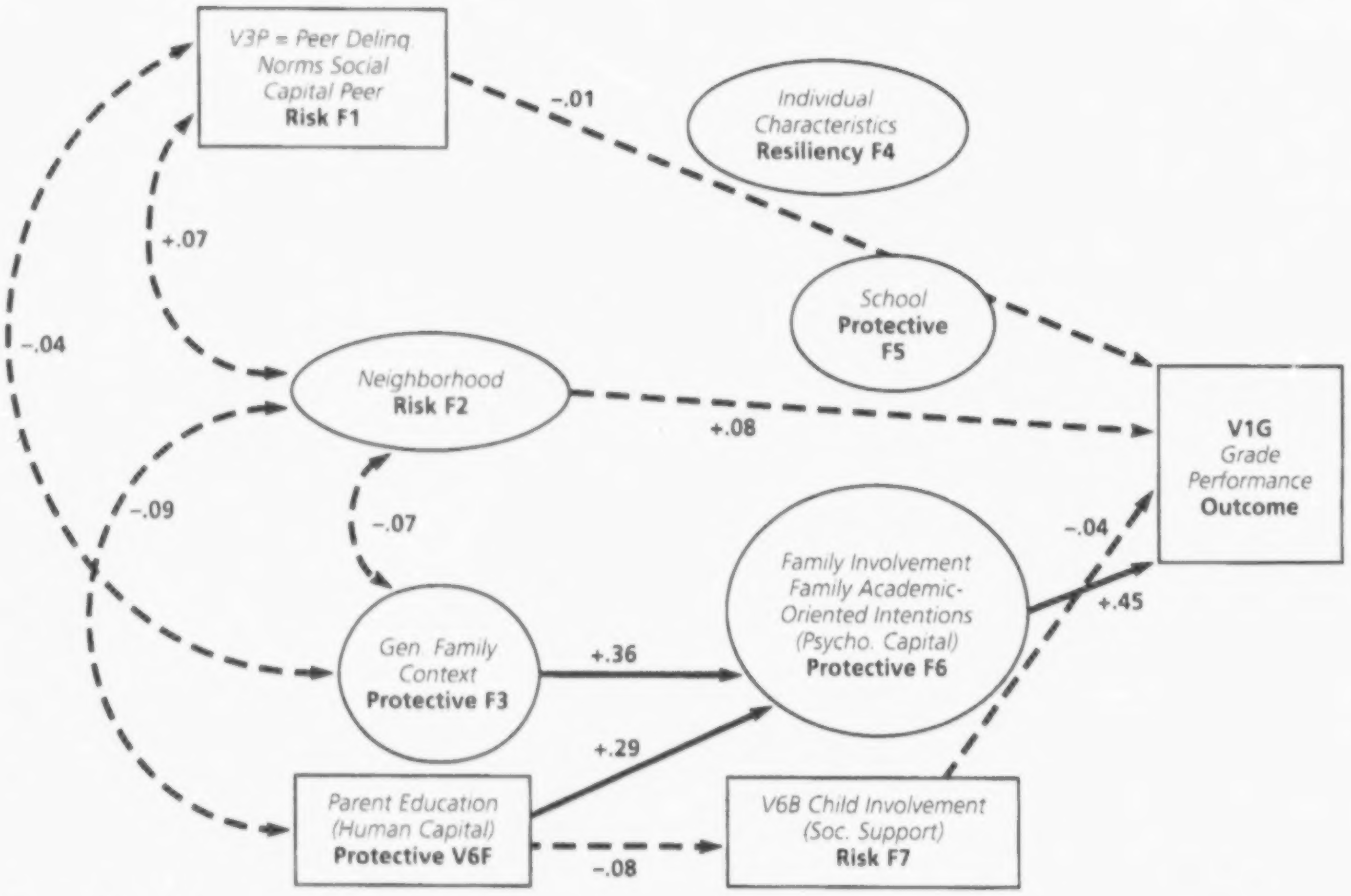
V3P = Peer Delinq. Norms Social Capital Peer Risk F1
Individual Characteristics Resiliency F4
School Protective F5
Neighborhood Risk F2
Gen. Family Context Protective F3
Family Involvement Family Academic-Oriented Intentions (Psycho. Capital) Protective F6
Parent Education (Human Capital) Protective V6F
V6B Child Involvement (Soc. Support) Risk F7
V1G Grade Performance Outcome
–.01
+.07
–.04
+.08
–.09
–.07
–.04
+.45
+.36
+.29
–.08

Figure 7.2. African American families' psychosocial context

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(+0.47 for American Whites and +0.29 for African Americans). However, the nature and the scope of influences mediated by "family academically oriented intentions" (factor f6; +0.56 for American Whites,and +0.45 for American Blacks) depended upon the constellation of the racial group.

For American Blacks, this underlying societal structure was observed as both student education aspirations' (v1i, +0.47) and his or her education expectations (v3i, +0.78), but functioned to mediate two recurring protective structures. One, a systematic influence conveying an underlying structure interpreted as "general family context of efficacy" (factor f3, +0.36) observed by three efficacy beliefs held by parents that referred to their perception of ability to act as "change agent" in the lives of the teenaged youth; an indication of psychological capital. The beliefs observed were: (a) How much he or she as parent could help his or her child avoid problems getting involved with troublemakers, using drugs, or drinking a lot of alcohol (v5f, +0.75; the anchoring variable determining the nature of the influence); (b) how much he or she as parent and other parents could do to get rid of drugs in his or her community, improve the quality of his or her child's school, or get more programs and activities for children and teenagers in their neighborhood (v3f, +0.50); (c) if a parent felt as though he or she could help his or her child avoid doing poorly in school, being unhappy, or feeling badly about himself/herself, or not being able to get a good job after finishing school (v4f, +0.41). The second of the two structures mediated was the protective systematic influence exerted from parent education attainment (v6f, +0.29).

In the constellation of experience for American Whites, family involvement ("family academically oriented intention") as a recurring mediator was observed only by "students' education expectations" (variable, v3i). However, it functioned to mediate three rather than two societal influences: (a) the risk influence conveying their disabling underlying neighborhood-level influence (f2, –0.33); (b) a risk influence conveying their disabling family-level efficacy belief (v3f, –0.14) (in contrast to the underlying protective influence indicated by three observed experiences observed among American Blacks); (c) a similar protective influence conveying their enabling parent "education attainment" (v6f, +0.47).

However, the most profound difference occurred in the context of school experiences (factor 5, variable v1s): "Parental evaluations of school's professionalism," as an indication of psychological and emotional capital, operated as a recurring protective mediating structure only for Whites (+0.17), mediating the negative risk influence of their neighborhoods (–0.06). Whereas for Black Americans, "*How much the teachers care about the students; How effective the principal is as the leader of the school; The skill of the teachers; Letting parents know how their children are doing; Parents partici-*

pate in decisions about how the school is run," neither mediated any risks or protective factors, nor occurred as a recurring enabling influence.

Pattern 3: Two Distinct Patterns of Functioning, to the Extent of Nonequivalence

As shown by Figures 7.1 and 7.2, two different patterns of function were evident, but to the extent that function also appeared as nonequivalent. First, although both systems are complex, the pattern in Figure 7.1 can be characterized as distinctly more "tight": more coherent and mutually reinforcing. Whereas in Figure 7.2, the overall pattern appears less tight: more fragmented and less reinforcing. In illustration, for White Americans, 12 of 15 contact or interconnection points appear as statistically significant or 80% among six societal structures, as opposed to only 3 of 15 or 20% among seven societal level structures for African Americans and their families. Although both groups interact within the same geographical boundaries of the continental United States, this is another order of evidence of two different ecologies: The "learning context of race," if White, tends to exhibit greater cohesion and mutual reinforcement, and a lesser tendency of cohesion and mutual reinforcement if African American.

Second, pattern function also appeared non-equivalent in terms of "openness." In Figure 7.1, patterns display a very closed set of recurring experiences, whereas in Figure 7.2 the pattern display might be interpreted as very open. For White Americans, 9 of its 12 systemic paths of influences, or 75%, exhibit statistically significant, systematic influences, among its six societal structures, of which each is included in some fundamental way. For African Americans, strong contrast is evident. Only 3 of its 11 systemic paths of influences, or 27%, exhibit statistically significant, systematic influences among its seven societal structures, of which only 4, or 57%, of its constellation are included in some fundamental way. This is an indication of cultural resiliency or susceptibility to external sources of influence. Although as a single unified structure both systems exert multiple of paths of influences, functionally, among its internal structures, fewer structures in this manner would suggest a *system of reduced efficacy, collectively.*

SUMMARY

Systematic patterns such as these, when experienced systemically as a single differentiated structural framework, describe how and where everyday life circumstances translate into sets of recurring patterns of risk and protective factors that are interrelated differently and differentially among African Americans in comparison to their White American counterparts. However, more profound is that such patterns, as a response to the "learning context" in the United States, indicate that each group also functions as if in dissimilar ecologies.

Statistically, neither group was able to "fit" the experience context of the other. Substantively, two very different patterns of risk and protective factors operate between African American families and their youth relative to their White American counterparts. Qualitatively, two very different patterns of structural resiliency function: A pattern of cohesion for White Americans, a pattern of fragmentation and less reinforcing for African Americans. In response to context in the United States, the implications are obvious: The usage of human, social, and psychological capital and its consequences are distinctively different and disserving for African Americans.

Of greater consequence is if these patterns become unabated. Over time, they convey a stable societal level of experience, and thus a foundation for becoming a continuing mechanism for intergenerational transfer. Thus culturally, these patterns become further rooted within the group's ecological landscape of experience. To the extent this web-fashioned set of experiences induces and supports the development of maladaptive and potential pathogenic outcomes, it comes to be observed as the racial group's mode of expression.

It is this order of behavior—*its fragmentedness, lack of multiple supports, absence of schools as enabling structure*—without waxing poetically, that characterizes how well African American individuals and their families are able to respond to and successfully engage and negotiate the myriad of modern-day life conditions. As an expression of struggle and powerlessness, whether African American parents believe that they can effectively intervene in the lives of their teens, it is clear that they believe that they must: the context of their race is less resilient and more susceptible to external influence, and consists of fewer enabling social and psychological support structures to assist them at the societal level of experience.

Behavioral pathologies of this fashion are not simple analog expressions. These observed patterns are only indicators of the underlying societal-level dynamics that ultimately function to induce violence evident in their community. Yet it is this magnitude of difference that we must first begin to recognize: The context of race does not apply to American White and Black subpopulations, equally or interchangeably. Negative health and behavioral consequences of an impoverished community for them as a group appear axiomatic.

HEALTH CARE AND VIOLENCE: A LOCAL CONCERN

A description of the antecedents to violence in relation to the education and socialization context has been put forth. Another facet of violence is its impact on the local health care system. Injuries of all types flood our emergency rooms, hospitals, and doctors' offices. Our example here draws from data collected by a southeastern teaching hospital. Once health care professionals know something about the "problem" and its risk factors, improving data collection efforts that include looking more holistically at patients as they come in for services and enabling the conditions of their lives to become part of the policy map, they then can, or at least should be in positions to better "weigh in" on effective preventive strategies.

In 1999, the number of admissions from the emergency room (ER) totaled more than 1,500. Since 1988, the total number of admissions has increased by 900, plateauing in 1996 (1,700), and declining to current levels. Patients most frequently represented in these data were either in their second or fourth decades of life. Individuals younger than 20 or older than 40 were much less frequently represented in these data. However, these data are overwhelmingly represented by males (66–67%); approximately, one-half of this trauma population is Caucasian and more than 30% African American.

Blunt mechanisms, approximately 20% by penetrating wounds, and the rest by burns or other mechanisms, injure approximately 75% of these trauma admissions. Hospital length of stay in 1999 for blunt injuries equaled a mean of 7.4 days and 6.0 days for penetrating injuries. Over two-thirds of patients were discharged while 7% went to rehabilitation facilities and 5% went to nursing homes. Although many blunt force injuries are related to car wrecks and other noninvasive processes, approximately 20% were produced by violent acts (penetrating wounds like gunshots or stabbings). We are just beginning to assess the impact of violence on those who witness or are victims. Yet, these data make clear the impact of violence on the local health care system.

As we are approaching a time in the United States when more of our citizens are being killed by guns than in motor vehicle crashes, when the majority of people killed by violence are the very young, local communities become effectively robbed of its sustaining life and its financial resources. Providers of health care must become better facilitators of change by "rethinking" their own standards-based reform: They must begin to look "more holistically" at their patients, and they must able to bring to the policy map focused and informed strategies that can remove social and societal level influences—*the perpetual levels of poverty and the maladaptive lifestyles associate with them*—that serve to significantly affect their capacity to manage care.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is not unreasonable to assume that poverty, joblessness, and the lack of life-sustaining employment "may promote violence by generating a sense of frustration, low self esteem, hopeless about the future, and family instability" (Satcher, 1995, p. 53). However, the nature and scope of this problem (i.e., violence, health, health care, race) is complex beyond this analysis, and precludes simple corrections. It is our finding that disparities in health are derived from "context inequality" rather than simple racial inequality, and reflect an external expression of individual and community-level struggles to meet the adverse effects of their environment.

Unfortunately, this broader view of the influence of societal and economic systems on violence has often been ignored when developing interventions. To truly affect change in the lives of the disenfranchised, remediations must move beyond rhetoric and programmatic experimentation to provide active policy guidance on social, community, and cultural levels. This guidance must recognize that the lives of many African Americans are distinctly different from their Anglo-American counterparts and the context in which they exist, often just as disparate. Radically different strategies are needed to address how differently both violence and its precursors are integrally woven into the communities these families experience.

Second, to affect the supports needed for individuals and their families, both scientists and the public at large must come to better understand how each group functions in dissimilar ecologies from a social system of resources and access afforded by the context of their race. Finally, it must be recognized that unabated differences in physical, psychological, social, and economic environments will continue in the direction of disadvantage for African Americans. Continued will be a perpetuation of poverty and social disenfranchisement. These will lead to higher risk of death from violent acts, life with chronic illness, and a myriad of physical and emotional health concerns as individuals struggle to meet the balance of a history of impoverishment and inadequate social structures.

Given the relations between inequity, violence, and health outcomes, rethinking intervention paradigms across multiple life domains is imperative. Intervention strategies must begin to focus on developing self-efficacy, empowerment, and the perception of connectedness to the American system. In an environment where success and failure to achieve the traditional "American dream" result in alienation and differential treatment, a redefinition of the "dream" is essential for many populations. More specifically, our society is set such that low educational attainment is associated with poverty, an increased risk of injury from active violence (gunshots, stabbings, etc.), and a lack of access to the health care system.

What has only recently been understood is that attaining the traditional "American dream" also has consequences for African Americans. Ironically, achieving academically is most frequently associated with increased incomes for few, and thus its capacity to provide for the acquisition of the culturally expected symbols of success (fancy cars, expensive homes, etc.). Even more interesting is that these symbols, when procured through legitimate means, often attract the undue attention of the police and law enforcement. Driving While Black (DWB) and other consequences of attained wealth are common in African American communities, along with the contradictions of the security inured by achieving stellar academic performance, each serve to perpetuate increased stress and decreased health status.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION POLICY INTO COMMUNITY POLICY

One such domain for intervention that may ultimately affect violence is the classroom. As an essential feature of the American learning experience, particularly given its lack of presence in the lives of many African American youth, we must begin to view the classroom as linked integrally to history and context. Formally integrating resources from the family and neighborhood as well as the school is essential in promoting wellness and a since of interpersonal- and societal-level connectedness.

Traditionally, educational policies have been constructed and then disseminated from the state boards of education to the classroom, in the absence of substantial influence from teachers and the community, and with economics as the most salient concern. Teachers, most often as the only recipients of these policies, have been seen as "street-level bureaucrats," registering their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with policies through their implementation or lack thereof (Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). We must begin to move beyond these models of education to models where policy is derived from a balance of both financial and social concerns.

We suggest that in order for social and educational policy to begin to drive social change and not just respond to it, policy formation must begin inside the classroom with teachers working hand-in-hand with the community. At present, administrators and bureaucrats, who are the often the most disconnected physically, emotionally, and intellectually from the classroom, determine classroom dynamics. We must empower those who are closest to the classroom to make decisions about the classroom and classroom policy (Elmore, 1980).

These decisions and policies include but are not limited to programs that (1) facilitate growth, development, and progress in students at risk for later problematic interactions; (2) promote the teaching of a more accurate American history that includes the roles of African Americans, women, and other groups that contributed to our success as a country; and (3) promote social connectedness by respecting and appreciating both similarities and differences between students.

Fundamentally, this approach to education reciprocally drives and is more responsive to cultural factors than our current system of education. For example, in this model, parents and teachers with the financial and clear support from the community form alliances that promote social connectedness, an appreciation for the historical context of education in the African American community. Schools, driven by policies that promote integration, without destroying cultures, equality, and appreciation of both cultural and individual similarities and differences, would be rewarded and even compensated for their successes. Many would ask, "Can we afford to use schools as a mechanism to drive social policy?" This question grows out of ignorance: We are currently driving social and cultural conditions with our schools and educational systems. The more intelligent question is, "Are we courageous enough to use the influence that schools have to alter social and cultural conditions in a positive manner?"

In a few districts around the country, educational policy is being used to positively influence social and cultural conditions. One such intervention, the Wake Education Partnership, founded in Raleigh, North Carolina, has been the umbrella for a series of strong programs that have worked to develop a constant cycle of community involvement and priority setting as a means for establishing concrete action plans to impact student achievement and system-wide reform. Dramatic enrollment growth and student body diversification has added pressure to this large system to accommodate the needs of many different populations. Prior to intervention, impoverished (free or reduced-price lunch) African American male students consistently underperformed academically, in comparison to the countywide average. This initiative formed collaborations between businesses, nonprofit organizations, parents, and educators to positively impact these at-risk students through changes in policies and elevated expectations in the classroom. Presently, these young African American males are beginning to perform at the level of their potential. Grades are increasing, as well as scores on standardized tests.

We certainly understand that these types of partnerships can only be successful when communities are willing to take the time to fully engage educators in substantive discussion of their community context, and if educators can be flexible enough to rethink the ways they factor in environmental considerations into the learning process (McLaughlin, 2000). Ultimately, the success or failure of these types of interventions lay with those politicians, who provide funding, and principals, who allow teachers to think and problem-solve at the level of the classroom and above.

There are no easy solutions. Yet with great clarity it is abundantly clear that the scope and the nature of lives typically experienced by African American youth and their families as a group must be more fully and thoughtfully addressed. Building more jails and hospitals will simply add "misplaced gains to inappropriate and unacceptable cost." Changes in income alone will be insufficient to address the many marginalized lives evident across America's modern-day landscape. Changes in education status alone without jobs for placement, growth, and advancement will be inadequate. Unless we as America's *body politic* are willing to acknowledge the orders of difference, discontent, and advantage, we will fail in our attempts to reconcile violence as a health and health care issue, and continue to promote life disparities as commonplace.

APPENDIX: LIST OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

Theoretical Risk Factors

I. Peer Context—Factor 1: Defined and coded as Educationally Nonsupportive.

1. **v1p**—Peer group education expectancies. Student report of: How many of your friends plan to go on to college? *All plan to attend college; Most, Some, None, Don't have any friends.*
2. **v2p**—Peer delinquency pressure as indication of peer norms. Student report of: Do you ever feel pressure from your friends to do any of the following things? *Work hard in school; Smoke marijuana; Skip school; Drink beer, wine, or liquor.*
3. **v3p**—Peer delinquency behaviors as indication of peer norms. Student report of: As far as you know, how many of your friends have done something like this. Tell me whether you think most of them, some of them or none of them, have done each thing. *Got sent to the principal's office; Worked hard in school; Cheated on test; Skipped school; Drank beer, wine, or liquor."*

II. Neighborhood Context—Factor 2: Defined and coded as Educationally Nonsupportive.

4. **v1n**—Neighborhood global evaluations as psychological capital. Parent report of: How would you rate your neighborhood as a place to raise children? *Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, or Poor.*
5. **v2n**—Neighborhood evaluations as indication of problems of neighborhood social organization and control. Parent report of: Please tell me if it is a big problem in your own neighborhood, somewhat of

a problem, or not a problem. *People don't have enough respect for rules and laws; Too many parents who don't supervise their children.*

6. **v4n**—Neighborhood norms as an indication of social integration as social capital. Parent report of: As far as you know, which are available for (children/teenagers) who live in this neighborhood? *Groups run by organizations like the Scouts, 4H, Boys Clubs, or Girls Clubs; Activities for (children/teens) organized by churches or temples organized by churches or temples; Tutoring programs to help kids with schoolwork; Special classes or programs in music, dance, foreign languages, or computers.*
7. **v5n**—Neighborhood global evaluations. Student report of: How is your neighborhood as a place for children to grow up? *Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, Poor, Don't know.*
8. **v6n**—Neighborhood evaluations as an indication of problems of economic opportunity and stability. Parent report of: Please tell me if it is a big problem in your own neighborhood, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem? *Crime and violence; Abandoned or run-down buildings; Lots of people who can't find jobs.*

III. General Family Context—Factor 3: Defined and coded as Educationally Supportive.

9. **v2f**—Family norms of respect for ideas as an indication of psychological and emotional capital. Student report of: Would you say that your mother respects your ideas and opinions about the important things in life? *Always, Usually, Sometimes, Never, Don't know.*
10. **v3f**—Family efficacy beliefs as change agent in solving teen problems as an indication of psychological capital. Parent report of: How much do you think you and other parents can do to help solve some (different) problems that affect (children/teenagers)? *Get rid* of drugs in your community; Improve the quality of your child's school; Get more programs and activities for (children/teenagers) in your neighborhood.
11. **v4f**—Family efficacy beliefs as change agent in teen's personal career growth and development as an indication of psychological capital. Parent report of: Please tell me if you think you, as a parent, can do a lot, some, or not very much to help your child avoid this problem. *Doing poorly in school; Being unhappy or feeling badly* about (himself/herself); Not being able to get a good job after finishing school.
12. **v5f**—Family efficacy beliefs as change agent in teen's delinquency growth and development as an indication of psychological capital. Parent report of: Please tell me if you think you, as a parent, can do a lot, some, or not very much to help your child avoid this problem. *Getting involved with troublemakers; Using drugs;* Drinking a lot of alcohol.

Theoretical Resiliency Factor

IV. Student Academically Oriented Behavior—Factor 4: Defined and coded as Educationally Supportive.

13. **v1b**—Student academic engagement of computer usage during previous year. Student report: How often did you use computers in a class at school? *Almost every day; At* least once a week; At least once a month; Once every few months; Less often than that; Never.
14. **v2b**—Student academic involvement as an indication of problem discussion with parent. Student report of: Please tell me whether you have ever talked with (your) (FEMALE PARENT) or (your) (MALE PARENT) about the following issues. Drugs; Schoolwork; Problems with friends; Problems in your family; Religion or values.

Theoretical Protective Factors

V. School Academically Oriented Intentions—Factor 5. Defined and coded as Educationally Supportive

15. **v1s**—Global evaluations of school professionalism as a learning context, an indication of psychological and emotional capital. Parent report of: Tell me whether you would give the school a grade of A, B, C, D, or F. What grade would you give for: *How much the teachers care about the students; How effective the principal is as the leader of the school; The skill of the teachers; Letting parents know how their children are doing; Parents participate in decisions about how the school is run.*
16. **v2s**—Global evaluations of school safety as a learning context, an indication of psychological and emotional capital. Parent report of: Tell me whether you would give the school a grade of A, B, C, D, or F. What grade would you give for*: How safe the school is for the students who attend; Helping students learn the difference between right and wrong.*
17. **v3s**—Global evaluations of school professional practices as a learning context, an indication of psychological and emotional capital. Child report of: Tell me whether this is something true for you and your school, or not true. *My teacher knows me; My parent knows my teachers and have talked with them; The principal at my school cares about the students; Kids who get good grades are really respected at my school.*
18. **v4s**—Global evaluations of school delinquency practices as a learning context, an indication of psychological and emotional capital. Child report of: Tell me whether this is something true for you and your school, or not true. *I feel safe at my school; Kids can* get away with

anything at my school; A lot of kids at my school use drugs; A lot of kids at my school drink a lot of alcohol."

VI. Family Academically Oriented Intentions—F6: Defined and coded as Educationally Supportive.

19. **v1i**—Student education aspirations, an indication of idealistic goals. Child report of: Looking ahead, what would you like to do about school? *Quit school as soon as* possible; Finish high school; Get some college or other training; Finish college; Take further training after college.
20. **v2i**—Student education aspirations; an indication of idealistic goals. Parent report of: "Looking ahead, how far would you like your child to go I school? *Leave high school* before graduation; Graduate from high school; Get some college or other training; Graduate from college; Take further training after college.
21. **v3i**—Student education expectations, an indication of realistic goals. Parent report of: "How far do you think (he or she) will really go. *Leave high school before graduation; Graduate from high school; Get some college or other training; Graduate from college; Take further training after college.*

VII. Family Academically Oriented Behavior—F7: Defined and coded as Educationally Supportive

22. **v3b**—Parental academic-behavioral involvement as an indication of psychological capital. Parent report of: Tell me whether this is something you and (CHILD) do together at least once a week; at least once a month; less often; never. *Do homework or school projects when school is in session.*
23. **v4b**—Parental behavioral involvement; provision of social experiences as an indication of social capital. Parent report of: Tell me whether this is something you and (CHILD) do together at least once a week, at least once a month; less often; never. *Go to religious services or other religious activities together; Attend a party or a family gathering together; Do volunteer work together to help other people or improve your neighborhood; Play a game or sport together.*
24. **v5b**—Child behavioral involvement as an indication of psychological and social capital with parent. Child report of: Tell me whether this is something you and *(your) (FEMALE PARENT) or (your) (MALE PARENT)* do together at least once a week, at least once a month; less often; never. *Talk about a television show that you watch together; Have a conversation about something that is worrying you; Have a conversation*

about religion or values; Have a conversation about the news of what's going on in this country.

25. **v6b**—Child behavioral involvement; social support of mother as an indication of emotional capital. Child report of: When something is bothering you, are you able to talk it over with your mother? *Always, Usually, Sometimes, Never.*

VIII. Family Education Status—Factor 8: Defined and coded as Educationally Supportive.

26. **v6f**—Highest education level of parent respondent as an indication of human capital. Parent report of: What is the highest grade in elementary school, high school or college that you finished and got credit for? *No formal schooling; Grades 1 to 6;* Grades 7 or 8 (junior high school); Grades 9, 10, or 11 (some high school); Grade 12 (high school graduate) or GED certificate (high school equivalent); Some business or trade school after high school; One to three years of college, or college incomplete; College graduate; Graduate or professional school after college.

IX. Student Academic Performance—V1G

27. **v1g**—Academic performance. Parent report of student grades as an indication of academic performance. What grades did (NAME OF CHILD) get in school last year? *Mostly As; As and Bs; Mostly Bs; Bs and Cs; Mostly Cs; Cs and Ds; Mostly Ds; Ds and Fs; Mostly Fs.*

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CHAPTER 8

DASHED HOPES AND WITHERED DREAMS

Alternative School for Boys Who "Don't Fit In"

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There are a number of studies that document school experiences of African American male students; however, most of this research is grounded in the traditional public schools (Clark, 1993; George, 1993; Irvine, 1991). There is a paucity of research that accounts for the experiences of students who have been displaced from the public school arena and relegated to alternative school environments. Existing accounts of alternative school experiences of African American students bring to mind three questions: First, what happened in traditional school that led to their expulsion? Second, how do these students make sense of their lives after expulsion? Third, are their dreams of success simply deferred while in the alternative school environment or do they simply vanish?

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an understanding of how students placed in alternative schools make sense of their life's experiences and how these experiences translate into their perception of schooling.

Surmounting All Odds, pages 175–190
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The chapter seeks to illuminate how their experiences ultimately influence their attitude toward acceptance or rejection of the traditional public school culture. How these students perceive their future opportunities in effect impacts how they respond to and matriculate through the alternative school environment.

THE CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The study on which this chapter is based was conducted at a midwest alternative school. The school population was predominantly African American males whose ages ranged from 10 to 16. Ninety percent of these students have been involved with juvenile authority and all have been mandated or referred to this school after expulsion or eligibility for expulsion from traditional public schools.

The theoretical perspective that drives this study derives from the premise that we see ourselves as others see us. Collins (1988) contends that the self would not exist without society. In the case of this study, students have been described by society as nonconforming and resistors of authority. As a consequence, students enrolled in this alternative school see themselves as not fitting into the norms of the traditional school environment. They hold the perception that teachers, school administrators, social workers, police, and classmates view them as troublemakers and therefore "expendable" and deserving of banishment to a separate school environment. They believe that others' judgment about them are congruent with their own, resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, if society views these students as predators, academic incompetents, and social outcasts, the consequence is that they are not given decent educational and occupational opportunities (Collins 1988). In the pages that follow, we will share conversations with students to illuminate their perceptions about their teachers, themselves, and their school experiences, as captured by an African American male scholar who was a former teacher at an alternative school. His perspective as an "insider" enabled him to discern subtle nuances that were intricately woven into the experiences of the students in this study. The analysis was a collaborative endeavor between this researcher and another colleague, the coauthor of this chapter. The outsider position of the coauthor provided an opportunity to explore alternative interpretations of the data as a way to establish reliable understanding of the findings. We begin this journey into the students' world by describing the first days at the alternative school.

SCHOOL WITHOUT BELLS

As we approached the school, we saw a group of students hanging around the front door waiting to hear (we assumed) the bell for school to begin. As it turns out, they were waiting for someone to signal the start of the school day so that they could take their places. There was no bell at this school. Two years prior to the opening of the alternative school, the building housed the local unemployment office. It was now the site where students were placed when they were deemed unable to make it in traditional public school.

The offices have been converted into small classrooms. One office became a shop class with a jigsaw and other hand tools. Another became a computer room equipped with several computers and a larger office was turned into a library that also doubles as a classroom. There is a director and an assistant director who are both White and male and five teachers, four of whom are White and female and one male Latino. There is one African American female social worker, and two African American females who comprise the support staff.

There are 25 students in this school, of which 20 are African American males and of this number 14 are labeled special education. These students have been summarily dismissed as misfits and academic incompetents. They have been deemed unwilling to acclimate to traditional school norms and are therefore described as castouts, incorrigibles, and throwaways. They have been deemed expendable by the school district and therefore placed in isolated environments where the focus is placed on resocializing or, in some instances, rehabilitating them. They are often subjected to a curriculum that seldom affords them an opportunity to talk about what they know, read real books, or read books in which they see their own realities reflected (Darling-Hammond, 1990). They are denied the opportunity to develop the capacities they will need to succeed in the future (Dunbar, 1999).

IN THE BEGINNING...

We were introduced to the teachers and support staff. The director welcomed me, suggesting that we spend some time observing and becoming acquainted with the culture of the school. We visited all of the classrooms over the course of several weeks doing participant observation. It wasn't long before we had identified the boys that we wanted to engage in further conversations. The decision was made after visiting Mr. Thomas's class that housed all the boys who wouldn't conform to the school culture, even in a school designated for nonconforming students. The circumstances of these children reminded us of inmates who have been deemed incorrigible and therefore placed in isolation away from the rest of the prison population. It's like putting the worst of the lot all together so that when havoc would break out (and it inevitably did), the disruptive students could be quickly isolated, controlled, and extinguished with minimal disruption to those students who made some effort to conform to the norms or accepted behavior of traditional school environments.

ACTIVE RESISTORS

We sat in the classroom and observed as the teacher attempted to bring students to order. It was clear from the beginning that the students had control of the classroom. Students were cussing each other out, "in each other's faces," and posturing from one end of the small room to the other. Part of the problem stemmed from the very close quarters in which these students were confined. However, this was only a symptom of a much bigger problem.

Most of the class period was spent just trying to get the students' attention. One student stood by the window pulling the shade up and down. Another was bullying a classmate out of his baseball cards while another refused to go to the director's office after continued efforts by the teacher to get him to cooperate. Finally, after little cooperation from the students, the teacher asked us to watch the class while he went to the office to get the director. Evident from this description is that these students did not conform to traditional school culture, and were similarly "defiant" in the alternative school. Their behavior expressed complete resistance to authority and norms typically displayed in traditional school environments.

Paul Willis (1977) and Vernon Polite (1994) have both researched students who resisted the traditional school culture. Both suggest that these students make a conscious effort to deliberately resist the school structure, policy, and rules. Polite further suggests that the efforts of resistance clearly intended to change policy to better meet their interest. For example, Peter one of the students in Mr. Thomas's class, said that he liked the school because "you could cuss people out an' teachers don't say nothin'." Another student when asked if it bothered him to hear doors slamming all day long while class was in session responded, "No it doesn't bother me 'cause I don't want nobody to say nothing to me when I go off" (Dunbar, 1999). By their deliberate resistance to authority these students force acceptance or tolerance of their oppositional behavior.

Though students in both Willis's and Polite's studies were also nonconforming, they managed to comply with rules governing traditional public school behavior to the extent that they were allowed to remain on the public school roll. Students in this study, whom we refer as to "nonconforming active resistors," have all been suspended or expelled. After class (said with tongue in cheek), we stopped four of the five boys and asked if they would agree to talk with us about their school experience. They agreed. We requested permission from their teachers to pull Ticco, Sanford, Keith, and RJ (pseudonyms) out of class, and to individually interview them. They agreed, so the interviews began. Our primary objective was to gain a deeper understanding of school life through the eyes of these young men.

ROAD TO EXPULSION

Given that all the students in this study had been expelled from traditional public schools, we wanted to gain a better understanding of the factors and circumstances that contributed to their admission to the alternative school. The following dialogue with the boys captures the complexity of dynamics that led to their eventual expulsion.

CD: How many times have you been suspended?

T: Hmm, four middle schools and I got kicked out of all four of them.

K: No, first it was Carson Bush Elementary. Then they took me out of there and had me going to a foster home after I got in the middle of the quarter. When it was about to end and we was about to go into the next grade, then they took me to another foster home, which was near Thomas Paine Middle School. Uh, I went to that school, then they shipped me to another one. Hold up, oh yeah, I went to another foster home that was right over there near Francis Nelson and I think I went to? I still went to Thomas Pane I think. Then I went to another foster home. I didn't go to school at all. Plus, they didn't know where no school was and plus didn't no bus go out there.

S: We had some fun at Columbus. From Columbus I went to Eastview. From Eastview I went to Northside. From Northside to Johnson and from Johnson to here. I've been to a lot of schools.

CD: What were some of the reasons you were suspended?

T: Cause I was fightin'.

RJ: When I got to first grade I was so bad and stuff they used to send me to Clipperidge (an elementary school designed to address aggressive adolescent behavior).

CD: What do you mean by so bad and stuff?

> RJ: I was cussing and fightin' all the time.
>
> K: I forgot most of the things I did but uhm it was mostly because of the behavior or hitting people and stuff like that. A lot of kids would like pick on me and stuff. They found out that I would start hitting back and beating them…

These children have been unable to peacefully resolve their differences with classmates and teachers. They describe themselves as "bad and stuff" and as having behavior problems including hitting other people. Fighting is the common theme that runs through all of their stories. These students' problems require further probing by school personnel. The first question should be "What underlies these students' seemingly disruptive behavior?" The second, "what can school officials do to address the problems?" It appears that the first question was frequently overlooked while the answer to the second question was exercised multiple times. That is, suspend, transfer, expel. Clearly, after transferring a student to several different schools it becomes evident that this is not the solution. Rather than uncover the immediate needs of the child, the problem is essentially swept under a rug, making it someone else's problem.

All of these boys had behavioral problems early in elementary school. RJ and Ticco were both transferred from their elementary school and placed in a school where they were supposed to have better trained personnel to handle difficult students. The boys were perceived by school personnel/ society as problem students. The boys saw themselves as having to prove their "toughness" among their peers. Being able to survive by defending themselves took precedence over whatever else is going on in school. Sending them to a school where the focus is to "handle difficult students" simply reified their perceived "tough guy" image. Now the students' focus becomes centered on developing the tough guy persona and not acquiring necessary life skills. As a result, much of their teachers' energies were focused on discipline issues. That is, teachers unfamiliar with the tough guy subculture spend an inordinate amount of time attempting to enforce a school culture that meant little to their population. What ultimately happens is the focus changes from an emphasis on teaching and learning to one where faculty are simply "making it through the day" with minimal disruption. The charge for school personnel is to "handle difficult students," which often boils down to more discipline and imposed restrictions. Yet both Ticco and RJ ended up in the alternative middle school. It is apparent that this method is ineffective. Before a solution is assessed it is necessary to first identify the problem. This method will avoid the tendency to simply address a symptom.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS

Students' perceptions of teachers and administrators frequently surfaced during the interviews, especially when we asked the boys to describe the problems that led to their placement into the alternative school. Students expressed concern about issues of race and prejudice in their interactions with school personnel. They suggested that teachers disliked them for no apparent reason that they could understand. It is not our intention to paint a picture of students who were ill-treated by faculty and/or administrators but rather to understand perceptions these students held in an effort to correctly understand and hence properly address the needs of this student population. What follows are responses from students about the teachers and administrators.

> CD: Describe your feelings about teachers and principals.
>
> S: I was in third grade. My teacher's name was Ms. Mason. I think that was her name. But our principal name was Mr. Oldman he wasn't too good.
>
> CD: Why? Let's talk about him for a minute. What was wrong with him?
>
> S: I don't know man, he was just mean you know he is prejudice. There's no doubt about it. He is prejudice.
>
> CD: Describe what you mean by that.
>
> S: OK, he was looking dead at me and this White boy, 'cause he knew we was going to do something wrong. So the White boy pushed me so, I was like. . . I was really good back in the day so I just ignored that because my mom told me to go to school and get my education not to worry about these other folks, because they ain't trying to get theirs, they trying to get you in trouble like the rest of them. She said don't even sweat that. So, I listen to my mom's instructions you know. I always listened to her. At the time I was leaving he pushed me and I kept walking away. My mom told me to tell the principal the next time he does it. I told Mr. Oldman and he said I'm gonna be watching. Well another time the boy pushed me and the principal was looking dead at us. Mr. Oldman didn't do nothing. So, I busted the boy's nose and then the principal was like you're getting suspended so my mom came up to school. The principal seen it you know, I'm like facing toward him and here go the White boy he don't even know Mr. Oldman was watching us. I'm looking dead at him, I turned around the next thing you know Mr. Oldman say, he was like—I saw you punch him I didn't see him push you. I said you was looking

> dead at us. No, I wasn't looking dead at you [said Mr. Oldman]. I said ok I ain't gonna sweat that one you know cause a lie ain't gonna get you nowhere and...so my mom went up there and I didn't even get suspended.

From the preceding description, Sanford immediately came to the conclusion that the principal showed a preference toward the White boy over him. He suggested that the principal is unprincipled—that is, dishonest and unfair. In Sanford's assessment, the principal saw the White boy hit him first and yet chose to ignore it. This response suggests that the notion of prejudice already exists in his head. The idea of White is not merely a physical descriptor but also a social and political construction. In his head, the White boy was treated better than he was because he was White. This results in a breakdown in the belief and respect for the concept of equal treatment, particularly when school is viewed as the sanctuary for fairness, the place where opportunities are equalized. When a breakdown in this system occurs, it manifested into distrust for its legitimacy. Hence, Sanford's retaliation toward the White boy was his way of making things equal.

Sanford's response also indicates that he entered school, as do many unsuspecting African American children, assuming equal treatment and equal access to educational opportunities. How this incident impacts his perception of these opportunities will emerge later.

A second issue involves the notion of getting "my education" because others are not trying to get theirs. Sanford indicates that getting an education is his right. There is also the notion, in pursuit of his education (presented to him by his mother), that there are some who might not be interested or "they ain't trying to get theirs. They trying to get you in trouble like the rest of them." He understands that there are peer influences that he must not succumb to because they'll only get him in trouble.

A third issue that emerges is Sanford's acceptance of what he sees as prejudicial treatment ("ok I ain't gonna sweat that one"). There seems to exist a sense of unfairness, yet with his perception of prejudice he is aware that this is sometimes how things are. He further believes because he has been taught (by his mother) that dishonesty will get you nowhere ("You know cause a lie ain't gonna get you know where"). Yet down the line there was vindication ("[s]o my mom went up there and I didn't even get suspended"). Here there is vindication in the sense that he wasn't suspended, but what about the perception of unfair play? Does he begin to internalize the notion that the system operates differentially for Black and White boys? This being the case, how does it impact his attitude belief and motivation about education and school?

CD: How did you feel about Mr. Oldman after he said he was going to watch and then he didn't? How did that make you feel?
S: That made me feel real mad because...it made me want to just hit him! I'm not really like that. From that day on though it just really made me mad and so now that's why I am acting like I am.

In another conversation:

S: My teacher's name was Ms. McDonald. I didn't like her.
CD: Describe her.
S: She had glasses. She ruled. She was mean. She never let us do nothing.
CD: Describe some of the problems you were having with teachers.
T: They'd ignore you and I got mad. I got a quick temper like my dad. That's why I get mad easily.
T: Do you know Ms. Jackson? That lady. . .
CD: Was she a Black or White woman?
T: Black.
CD: Was she a teacher or a principal?
T: She was the principal and she kept getting on my nerves. The teachers at that school get on my nerves too.
CD: What were some of the reasons why you got mad at teachers? Describe a typical situation where you got mad at a teacher.
RJ: She'd give me a bad mark and I just, I don't know. They just send me away to the other school.
CD: Did the teacher give you a chance to explain your situation?
RJ: No, they used to say, "You always say the same thing every time, RJ." I always used to hang out in the hallway with my homies and played around. I had teachers scared of me just let me do what I wanted to do.
CD: Were there any teachers at Washington whom you felt cared about you?
K: No.

Here, there are several points regarding perceptions held by the students about their teachers. Responses ranged from a sense of being ignored to teachers getting on their nerves. The idea that these students feel that teachers ignore them raises the question of why. Is it an indication that teacher expectations of African American males are so low that they expect them not to know the answer? Poussaint (1987) suggests that African American males are probably perceived as potentially threatening, eliciting fear reactions in teachers. Irvine (1991) further adds that when teachers are provided information that an African American male is threatening, they hold low expectations of him. Teachers who believe that their students will be a problem will typically react to nontraditional behaviors as problematic rather reflect on their particular interaction with the student. Hence, a non-conforming student who may challenge teacher authority is viewed as a problem student. Compound this disposition with a belief that students are threatening and you will find a child who has been summarily dismissed as academically incompetent and a social misfit. It appears that teachers' efforts are focused more on controlling the behavior of some students rather than providing a learning opportunity for the child. Hence, less regard is paid to enhancing the educational opportunities of the student and more emphasis placed on containing and maintaining control. Therefore, much less is expected from the student with respect to academics. Children are now rewarded for simply sitting in their seat without causing major disruptions. If you expect very little you will usually get very little.

Lemelle (1995) explains that Black male children consistently question teacher commitment and sincerity. "To them, the teacher's commitment and sincerity to them in educating them are questionable." Lemelle further presents one student's perception of a teacher's noncommitment when he states, "Oh the teachers don't care if you don't come in here. They give you work that you don't understand. They don't want to help you ...[w]hen you ask them for help they get mad. You get smart, 'cause they don't help you, they don't help you they send you out" (p. 53).

Regarding academic achievement, teachers' expectations of students is highly influenced by academic performance (Ross & Jackson, 1991). If a student is performing poorly academically, then the teacher's expectations of this student are low. The teacher's expectations over time are communicated to the student. If that expectation is low it will likely "affect student self-conception, achievement motivation, level of aspiration, classroom conduct and interactions with teachers" (Irvine, 1991, p. 44). Students usually conform to these expectations more than they ordinarily would have (Irvine 1991).

The role that teachers play in the school performance of African American children is central and critical. The relationship between a student and a teacher rivals the relationship between a parent and a child (Irvine, 1991). Teachers "consciously and unconsciously inculcate students for their appropriate role in the institution by delivering messages, sanctions and rewards about appropriate behaviors and expectations (Irvine, 1991, p. 47).

Irvine (1991) suggests that teachers not only influence students' achievement and their cognitive development but also influence their self-concept and attitude as well. How a child feels about him- or herself is to a large extent determined by the child's perception of how the teacher feels about him or her. "Student perceptions of their teacher's feeling toward them have been found to be highly correlated with the student's self concept. Many children who believe that they are not liked by their teachers do not like themselves or school" (Irvine, 1991, p. 48). This effect is particularly prevalent for low-income and minority students because they hold their teachers in higher esteem (Coleman, 1966, cited in Irvine, 1991).

STUDENTS' SELF PERCEPTION

As part of this study, it was important to gain an understanding of perceptions students held about themselves, particularly when teachers seemingly have so great an influence. Irvine (1991) suggests that teachers are held in high esteem by African American children, second only to preachers. Teacher perceptions of students, particularly African American children, have a profound impact on how they feel about themselves.

> RJ: Man, it was like everybody was better than me. All these White people and I was Black, I didn't want the White people to think man, this Black dude is stupid and slow. When people say he's slow, that make you want to fight somebody when they call you slow. When somebody call you slow that make you real mad and stuff. So I be like man, I'll just wait to everybody leaves and stay after and ask her [the teacher] then or I'd ask her in her ear and stuff like that.
> CD: Sanford, what were some of the things your teacher would say about you?
> S: She thinks I'm an intelligent child.
> CD: Yea h,what gave her that impression?
> S: 'Cause I don't know but uhm she'd tell me every morning I'd come to school, "Sanford, you are so intelligent."
> CD: How'd that make you feel?
> S: Happy, every time she'd tell me that I'd have a good day but...
> CD: Oh, everyday that she'd tell you that you were intelligent, did that make you feel good enough so that you'd have a good day?
> S: Yup, but if teachers don't tell me, then I feel that I'm a bad person.

Sanford went on discuss another teacher's perception of him:

> S: She would say, that's a bad little boy. She White, she don't like me. I thought she was prejudice.
> CD: What does prejudice mean to you?

S: Prejudice mean ok, that they don't ... it mean to me that a White person don't like a Black person just cause of the color of they skin but not on how they act.

CD: Keith, were there teachers at Madison that you thought cared particularly about you?

K: Nope.

CD: What was your experience like at Madison?

K: I'd say bad because you know myself I was bad myself, but then again they had to move me away from the class. Like I had to face the wall or something or like facing a little cabinet. She had sent me there but I was facing one way and the class was facing another. That's the only way I'd get my work done 'cause other kids would keep messing with me, kicking me and junk like that.

CD: Ticco, are you in Mr. Thomas's class most of the day?

T: Yup.

CD: Why do you think that's the case?

T: Because that's a BD class.

CD: What does BD mean?

T: Bad behavior disorder.

CD: Is that you?

T: I don't know.

CD: You know yourself better than anyone else. You know you? Is that you?

T: It might be me, but I don't know.

A number of issues emerged from this exchange. RJ perceives that he's slow but he doesn't want other students to realize this, so he doesn't ask the teacher questions until after class is over. Ticco is in the behavior disorder class but isn't really sure he belongs there, or he is unwilling to admit it. In either case there is cause for concern. Keith admits that he's so bad that the only way he could get his work done was by facing in the opposite direction of the rest of the students during class. So essentially he was opposite of the direct flow of teaching. Sanford suggested that if a teacher didn't tell him he was intelligent he'd have a bad day in school.

RJ clearly senses that something must be wrong with him because he's slow. But even further, he senses that Black people are perceived as slow by Whites and therefore something was wrong with him that is innate in being Black.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

All of the participants shared their understanding of what education meant to them. Frequently, their understanding of education was grounded in what their parents had told them, or in popular slogans about "staying in school." However, the boys did not seem to have a clear understanding of how education would influence their own life chances. Their own experiences in school, often negative, did not reinforce the positive outcomes that others claimed would result from "staying in school."

> RJ: It's like when you get that diploma, you can get any job you want to get. You know what I'm saying? That one piece of paper can get you far. That's why I say if I can do that I can do anything. I want to grow up and be something. Be like one of the Black men that growed up and got his education and done something with my life. Like own my own business. Then the White people will be looking back at me and say this Black man done something...
>
> S: My mom told me to go to school and get my education and not to worry about these other folks because they ain't trying to get theirs, they trying to get you in trouble like the rest of them.
>
> T: What is education? I guess if you want to go to college or something you've got to get an education. Before you do anything, before you get a job and all that and that's all.
>
> K: It means that I could get straight A's, learn what I have to learn and go through the things that are important to me like mathematics and mostly going to play football and basketball or both. Then you go to shop and home economics. Well, then I'll need good English. I have to know how to read 'cause you ain't gonna know how to read plays or nothing if you don't know how to read. You gonna have to know the signs like in basketball, if you put out a sign and you can't remember it you ain't gonna go nowhere with that. If the team loses because of you, then the people ain't gonna be too happy with you so you're gonna have to know part of mathematics. . . A lot of times you gonna have to know different languages so that's when people talk different languages and stuff. I think that's what's important is right there.

These students have embraced a belief that getting an education is necessary in order to be successful. They have accepted the notion that education will provide them opportunities to achieve. That diploma, from their perspective, will open the door of opportunity. Ticco suggests that you have to get an education even before you can go to college. RJ suggests that an education will allow you to do anything. These students know the rhetoric. They know the jargon, yet they are unable to walk the talk. They espoused a belief in the system but were unwilling or unable to play by the rules. Furthermore, these students realize that the road they're currently traveling will not provide them with opportunities to achieve their aspirations. Some of them blame themselves for their predicament. We've listened to these students express their aspirations and how they were going to be re-enrolled in traditional public school. Yet soon after these conversations, they would engage in behavior that suggested that either they had no control over their behavior (because they had indicated earlier that they were aware that their behavior was inappropriate) or they believed that something magical would happen and that all of their behavior problems will somehow disappear or simply be ignored. These children talked about education in a very generic sense. However, the process required for acquiring it has completely alluded them. Some of these children were passed on to the next grade level without acquiring the necessary tools to be competitive, yet knowing this they continue to talk about the need to "get an education." They seemed to understand the ideal but did not know how to accomplish it. The culture of schooling and the perceptions and attitudes held by their teachers were not particularly helpful in assisting these students in navigating through the maze of the educational system.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the students shared a glimpse of their lives with me and we in turn have shared them through our lens with you. Together we have previewed pages from their story of experiences and perceptions of schooling, education, teacher perception, and feelings about themselves.

Does this perception of teachers by students and of students by teachers change as a result of student placement in an alternative school for behavior problem students? Is it further compounded as a result of students' academic deficiencies? The research suggests that this combination, coupled with being an African American male, results in the worst possible environment for providing an optimal educational opportunity. Teacher expectations of African American male students who are nonsubmissive and performing poorly academically typically are not expected to do well now or in the future. This depiction characterizes the students in this study.

We have discussed what appears to be a cultural phenomenon regarding the "tough guy" image that many African American males experience (Oliver, 1989). We further discussed how this image is exacerbated in this alternative school environment because of the mixing of students who are in a situation where this phenomenon is much more pronounced. These students all have a reputation they feel they must uphold. "I am here at this school 'cause I'm bad!" The word *bad* here takes on many meanings depending on how it's accented. When the students use it referring to behavior such as talking too much in class and office referrals they're talking about their perception of inappropriate behavior. When it is used to describe other students who think they're tough or who "go for bad" it's meaning refers to fighting. I do not believe these students feel that fighting especially in defense of oneself (i.e., someone putting their hands on them be it teacher, student, or otherwise, or someone talking about them or their mother), is necessarily something bad or, stated in school vernacular, "inappropriate behavior." In this context, being bad is seen as something good. This is the law of the culture. There are certain things that are unacceptable and consequently grounds for fighting.

What happens in a school whose curriculum, pedagogical style, and middle-class values mirror those of the traditional public from which these students have been expelled, and who sense a feeling of rejection from the very ones charged with provided them with an education? Many students suggested that there is no real difference between this school and the school from which they were expelled. As an alternative school, shouldn't the students notice a difference between the two types of school other than fewer students? If students are claiming there's no difference, then the same annoyances that resulted in their expulsion from public school exist here in this school. What's next after alternative school?

Do the experiences of these students warrant isolation from other students who are able to adapt to the school ethos and who may serve as examples of how to deal with situations in a socially acceptable way? If the response to this question is yes, how will these children learn appropriate behaviors? Do these students need peer role models? If so, where will they come from when all of the students in the alternative school are viewed as "belligerent" or "delinquent"? The likelihood of their emergence from among the student population in this school are slim at best.

It is imperative for alternative schools to recognize that they are not only serving students with behavior problems. Their students' issues are often intricately related to broader problems (i.e., disrupted family lives, drug and alcohol abuse, juvenile delinquency) and a school culture unaccepting of or inadequately trained to meet the needs of this population. Therefore, the sole purpose of alternative schools cannot be to simply isolate disruptive students; they must focus on systematically addressing the "whole" student. Simply using the same deterrent measures employed in public schools will not work. These students have already experienced the best the public school has to offer in that realm.

Finally, how can the dreams of these students be nurtured so that they are embraced members of our communities? Perhaps the first step is to resolve that these boys are not expendable. It is our responsibility as a society to meet their needs. It should be our commitment to guide them to identify their dreams and direct their actions to enable them to achieve them.

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CHAPTER 9

FROM CLASSROOMS TO CELLBLOCKS

African American Juveniles in the Justice System

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> *The connection of crime and prejudice is neither simple or direct. The (Negro) boy who is refused promotion in his job as a porter does not go out and snatch somebody's pocketbook. Conversely the loafers...and the thugs in the county prison are not usually graduates of high schools who have been refused work. The connections are more subtle and dangerous; it is the atmosphere of rebellion and discontent that unrewarded merit and reasonable but unsatisfied ambition make. The social environment of excuse, listless despair, careless indulgence and lack of inspiration to work is the growing force that turns Black boys and girls into...rascals.*
>
> —W.E.B. Du Bois (1899, p. 351)

In many ways, it is difficult to calculate the daily impact on children of growing up in neighborhoods where incarceration appears to be an inevitable aspect of maturation, of growing up. Childhood is generally perceived of as a time of innocence. The intersection of childhood and criminality in our society has created some uncomfortable tensions and

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unwarranted solutions. When violent crimes are committed by young offenders, what is a society to do? Shall we sentence children as though they were adults? Shall we warehouse them, or shall we attempt to rehabilitate them? Complicating matters is the nexus between race, class, and the overrepresentation of children of color, young African American males, in particular, committed to residential facilities in the justice system. Because of their disproportionate representation in the justice system, African American males in the juvenile justice system is the focus of this chapter.

Information on residents in juvenile custody, drawn from the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, indicates that nationally, custody rates for Black juveniles are twice the rate for Latinos and five times the rate for Whites (U.S. Department of Justice 2000). Related data report minority proportions of the total population of juveniles in residential placement at 75% or greater in seven states: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). In maximum security facilities, the rates are even higher. America's young Black males have become America's disposable children. As our society enters the millennium, because of increasing immigration and a second baby-boom generation, our youth population will double, primarily among juveniles of color. One can only speculate as to the potential consequences of an exploding juvenile population of color in a growing climate of intolerance.

Generically speaking, the topic of juveniles of color in the justice system intersects some of the crucial issues of the day: disproportionate sentencing for the same crime, racial profiling, inadequate legal representation, mandatory minimums, the war on drugs, family instability, academic underachievement, dropout rates, female offenders, and the role of race, poverty, and gender in juvenile sentencing as well as incarceration. Often overlooked is the staggering increase of Black female offenders in the justice system. The high recidivism rate of juvenile offenders in maximum facilities, who graduate into adult facilities, speaks to a profound loss and waste of human potential, of human capital. That youth from certain racial groups bear the brunt of disproportionate arrests and incarceration deeply impacts social interaction and social cohesion in a democratic society. The intended and unintended consequences of our present policies of discarding and disposing of certain segments of our population have and will continue to have dire consequences on both an individual as well as a societal scale.

In the wake of America's climate of law and order, policymakers have taken steps to ensure the safety of children and of society. However, in the haste for swift and immediate punishment, rhetoric has replaced logic. The result is zero tolerance, a policy adapted from criminal justice policies, that has set in motion a series of events disproportionately affecting children of color, their families, and their communities (Harvard University Civil Rights Project, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Our society is now facing a growing crisis of credibility with the criminal justice system as the focal point. In the last decade, America has been building more prisons and incarcerating more people than at any other moment in our history. In fact, America has witnessed the greatest rise in prison population in modern history. Ironically, data reveals a declining crime rate yet an escalating incarceration rate (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). It is difficult to exaggerate the extent to which the criminal justice system has selectively enveloped the lives of so many young African American males and a growing number of young females of color. A caveat is in order here. While violence by girls, especially juvenile females of color, is of growing importance, that topic will not be covered here. Because differing yet related issues other than criminality are involved, it is recommended that far more sustained research be conducted on this topic.

RESEARCH ON THE NEW PENOLOGY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

The literature on juvenile justice is substantial. Research (Yeakey, 1998, 1999) has reviewed the conceptual approaches to juvenile justice since the founding of the first juvenile court in Cook County, Illinois, in 1899. While the traditional penological concern focussed on the individual offender, the new penological focus has evolved to an actuarial model focussed on the management of aggregates, with techniques to identify, classify, and manage groups sorted by their potential danger to the community (Schichor, 1997). This approach is more concerned with responses to social harm based on aggregations and statistical averages than with the punishment and treatment tailored to individual perpetrators. Accordingly, certain subpopulations, which are identified as high rate offenders, career criminals, or habitual offenders, and identified by social scientists as the underclass, are to be singled out for special surveillance, aggregate management, and selective incapacitation.

The new penology has rekindled the historical notion of dangerous classes that traditionally has been linked to the urban poor. The new penology parallels Wilson's (1987) depiction of the underclass, a marginal population, unemployable, lacking in adequate education and marketable skills, and without any real prospects or hope to change its situation. This approach also bears similarity to the Marxist concept of the lumpenproletariat, an exploited and potentially dangerous class whose members lack class consciousness, and instead of fighting the ruling class to change their inferior social and economic conditions, prey mainly on their poor working-class compatriots.

Research literature focusing specifically on the plight of the African American male is a phenomenon of the latter half of the 20th century. Gordon, Gordon, and Nembhard's (1994) work compiled the social science literature concerning African American males in the inner cities, grouping the literature into four major categories of issues: demographic and statistical issues, psychosocial issues, political/economic issues, and educational issues.

Three new theories devoted to the inequitably poor academic outcomes experienced by young males of color that may prove to be promising in studying this population are the Stereotype Threat Model (Steele, 1997), the Cultural-Ecological Perspective (Ogbu, 1992), and the Cool Pose (Majors & Billson, 1992). While preliminary, these theories begin to explore the social and cultural factors that can inhibit academic excellence. Steele (1997) argues that while all students experience anxiety over possible failure in academic settings, individuals who are members of groups that are viewed as intellectually inferior experience increased anxiety because personal failure could confirm the negative group stereotype. Accordingly, because anxiety is aversive, he proposed that members of these groups would seek to reduce anxiety by detaching their self-esteem from academic outcomes, or disidentifying. Theoretically, this disidentification protects the student's self-esteem from adverse academic outcomes. Students who are more identified with academics are more motivated to succeed because their self-esteem is directly linked to high academic performance. Students not identified with academics such as African American males are less motivated to succeed because there is no contingency between academic outcomes and self-esteem—good performance is not rewarding and poor performance is not punishing—leaving those who have disidentified with no compelling incentives to expend effort in academic endeavors. Disidentified individuals may therefore be at higher risk for academic problems, especially poor grades and dropping out, but also absenteeism, truancy, and delinquency. Steele argues that young males of color do not begin schooling disidentified and that identification with academics is a malleable state, with the right interventions.

Ogbu's (1990) Cultural-Ecological Perspective speaks to involuntary or nonimmigrant minorities who see school as an inappropriate aspect of "proper" African American identity. He argues that African American children are encouraged to value other aspects of society, usually whatever is in opposition to White values, as appropriate for themselves. Ogbu labels this phenomenon "cultural inversion." Such cultural inversion serves boundary-maintaining and coping functions under subordination. Inversions remain because there are few incentives to give them up while members of these groups still feel subjugated and oppressed.

Majors and Billson's (1992) Cool Pose argue that young African American urban males adopt a "cool pose" or a ritualized form of masculinity that allows boys to cope and survive in an environment of social oppression and racial animus. Cool pose allows the young urban African American male to survive by projecting a front of emotionlessness, fearlessness, and aloofness that counters inner pain from damaged pride, poor self-confidence, and fragile social competence that comes from existing as a member of a subjugated group. In terms of education, cool pose often leads to flamboyant and nonconformist behaviors that frequently elicit punishment in school settings. Equally unfortunate, the development of a cool self-concept appears to be incompatible with a hard-driving, motivated, identified student. Thus, African American boys, according to this perspective, adopt a strategy for coping with group membership that appears to be incompatible with identification with academics.

In sum, while these theories seek to understand the problem of African American male student underachievement from different perspectives, all three seem to imply that African American students, particularly boys in the inner city, are at a higher risk for academic disidentification than either White students or students from other minority groups. This increased level of disidentification, in turn, is likely to be a significant contributing factor to academic problems, including underperformance, withdrawal from school, delinquency, and other undesirable academic outcomes.

The urban education system represents a fundamental paradox for African American males. School continues to be held up by the broader society and by African Americans themselves as the institution that makes possible upward mobility, yet Black male youths' encounters with it have resulted too often in destroyed aspiration and failure. Zero tolerance policies and school dropout rates have immobilized urban males, creating a technologically marginalized, obsolete, and disposable subpopulation.

We know that schooling, indeed formalized education, is the *rue du passage,* the ladder upon which ambition climbs to privilege, to social, economic, and political mobility (Yeakey, 1981; Yeakey & Gordon, 1982). It is requisite to self-fulfillment, employability, and one's full participation in a growing information and technological society. While it is reassuring that considerable attention is now being given to the quality of public schooling, and whereas public schools have been effective for many students, they have been and continue to be ineffective for large percentages of students disproportionately represented by persons of color—African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and the poor. Nowhere is the need greater than the focus on education, miseducation, and underachievement of African Americans, in general, but African American males in particular (Polite & Davis 1999). Some factors are not mere additive, but sustaining and mutually reinforcing: African Americans' unequal access to and facilities for formal education; disproportional suspension and expulsion rates; the poor quality of schooling; exacerbated cultural differences between students and teachers; inadequate home and family support; poor academic socialization; high school dropout rates and declining college attendance; disproportionately high placement of African American males in special education programs; disparities in rewards for educational achievement between Blacks and other groups; high crime rates; unemployment and unemployability; and the low expectations of academic productivity for African American students, in general, and African American male students, in particular, provide a telling portrayal (Polite & Davis, 1999). One of the most important conclusions to be drawn in the contemporary study of young Black males is that their social and economic conditions are not unitary problems that occasion unitary solutions (Gibbs, 1988). Failure to appreciate this reality often causes policymakers and researchers to analyze problems impacting the Black male as though they existed in a vacuum outside traditional institutional and structural boundaries, power relationships, and opportunity structures of the larger society.

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES TO CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Since the 1760s and through the 1820s, the criminal justice systems in Western societies have always faced a growing crisis of credibility: punishment for crimes was wildly arbitrary and capricious (Duster, 1995). Some thieves were hanged for stealing cloth worth very little, while murderers often served only a few months in prison. For the same crime, one person could get 20 years' imprisonment while another served a few weeks, and yet another hanged. Victor Hugo's (1900) *Les Misérables* immortalized the period with his enduring tale of the cruel long-term sentencing of Jean Valjéan for stealing a loaf of bread. More than 100 years ago, philosophers Kant and Hegel, and the premier theorist of criminal law in the first part of the 19th century, Paul Johann Anselm Von Feuerbach, argued that it was imperative to find a way to make punishment better fit the crime (Elliott, 1931; Ellis & Ellis, 1989; Ezorsky, 1972; Heath, 1963). One after another, social analysts, essayists, historians, and moral philosophers lamented, analyzed, and commented upon how chaotically uneven punishments were undermining the legitimacy of the state's use of its power. Indeed, the emergence of legal rights for the accused, protection from the arbitrary and abusive behavior of the courts, a position best articulated by Italian social theorist Francesco Carrara, was one of the signal accomplishments of the movement to limit the powers of the state, an extraordinary achievement of the Enlightment period (Duster, 1995).

As we fast-forward perhaps a century and a half, one realizes the profundity of Alphonse Karr's (1849) prophetic statement, "the more things change, the more they remain the same." A century and a half later, we face a growing crisis of credibility within the criminal justice system and the juvenile justice system. This time the focal point is America. America fails to see the current crisis in our justice system from a sociohistorical perspective. The centerpiece of America's crisis is the war on drugs and its dominant role in radically shifting incarceration figures, rates, and legislatively mandated sentencing.

A review of the relevant evidence is sobering. In the last decade, America has been building more prisons and incarcerating more people than at any other moment in our history (Mauer & Huling, 2000). As states and municipalities attempt to augment sagging economies, many have entered a prison derby to warehouse prisoners not only from their own state, but other states as well. In the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, America has experienced the greatest rise in prison populations in modern history. There is now near complete consensus among criminologists that drug control strategies, and the selective punishment of young African American males, account for most of the increase in the U.S. prison population (Duster, 1995; Skolnick, 1995; Mauer & Huling, 2000). The increase has been so profound that some criminologists term that increase "conveyor belt justice" or the McDonalization of Punishment, embodied in the model of fast food restaurants (Schichor, 1997). We now have a new form of assembly-line punishment.

One is reminded of one of the recurring gags on the *I Love Lucy Show*, which had Lucy working on an assembly line boxing candy and wrapping packages, when the boss sped up the line. Suddenly there was no way for the frantic Lucy to keep up. She boxed and wrapped as quickly as she could, obviously determined to do her best under the dreadful circumstances, but the packages always overwhelmed her—until someone thought to pull the stop switch. It was funny when it happened to Lucy. It is not so funny when it happens in the criminal justice system, in our juvenile justice system.

In state after state, it is the incarceration rate that has increased, not the crime rate. The accelerator is mandatory sentencing for drug offenses (Duster, 1995; Mauer & Huling, 2000). Young urban males of color are the primary target. It is impossible to exaggerate the extent to which the net of the criminal justice system, and the juvenile justice system in particular, has selectively enveloped the lives of so many African American males, the very population in dire need of education, not incarceration.

During the last year of apartheid in South Africa in 1993, an African American male in the United States was five times more likely to be incarcerated than his South African Black male counterpart (Duster, 1995).

During 1989 in the United States, 35% of all Black males between the ages of 16 and 35 were arrested. In the arrest data for California, among White youth ages 18–28, chances of an arrest are 3 in 10, but for Black youth ages 18–28, chances of arrest are 7 in 10. Nationwide in the age group 16–19, 15% of Black males face arrest in any given year. These data are to be explained in large part by increased participation of Black male youth in street sales in the new underground drug economy, the selective enforcement for drug laws for street dealers and the harsher mandatory sentencing guidelines aimed at crack cocaine versus powder cocaine.

According to the government's own best statistics, African Americans constitute only 15–20% of the nation's drug users, but in most urban areas, they constitute approximately one-half to two-thirds of those arrested for drug offenses (Flanagan, 1990; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1990). In New York City, studies concluded that African Americans and Latinos constituted 92% of all those arrested for drug offenses (Clark, 1992). As a direct consequence of the war on drugs, the nation should not have been surprised by national data reported by the Sentencing Project that nearly one-fourth of all young Black males were either in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole on any given day (Duster, 1995). These figures have been cited so often that the data may have inured us to the fact that there was less astonishment to an announcement in mid-1990s that in a related study in Baltimore, Maryland, it was revealed that 56% of that city's young Black males were under some form of criminal justice sanction on any given day (Miller, 1992).

A recent study released by the Washington think tank, the Justice Policy Institute (2002), provides a fiscal guide to state spending over the last 15 years, as the public attempts to balance the needs of the nation's universities against those of the prison system. Nationwide, according to the report, an estimated 791,600 Black men were in prison and jail, and 603,000 in higher education in 2000. Data reveal that throughout the 1980s and 1990s, funding for higher education has been sacrificed to an expanding and costly corrections system. Given the structure of state financing, the funding for prisons and universities has collided in the same part of the states' discretionary funding pot. With about half of state monies being restricted to deliver key services, build projects, and operate basic programs, the remainder of state funding, approximately 50%, is discretionary, meaning one program may be cut to fund another. It is this discretionary pot of money that is referred to as a state's general fund. Higher education funding and spending for corrections have generally come from the general fund. Consequently, as prison populations quadrupled over the last two decades, corrections' share of the general fund grew, decreasing the number of dollars to fund programs like higher education. As Table 9.1 shows, from the 1950s to the 1980s, the share of state and local

Table 9.1. Higher Education and Prison Spending as a Share of State and Local Expenditures from the 1980s to 2000

Year	*Total State and Local Expenditures (Dollars in Billions)*	*Higher Education Spending (Dollars in Billions)*	*Higher Education Spending (Percent of Total)*	*Prison Spending (Dollars in Billions)*	*Prison Spending (Percent of Total)*	*Prison and Jail Populations*
1952	$20.00	$0.70	3.50%	$0.30	1.50%	252,615
1960	$38.10	$2.00	5.20%	$0.60	1.60%	332,915
1970	$107.50	$7.60	7.10%	$1.60	1.50%	338,029
1980	$307.80	$24.70	8.00%	$6.40	2.10%	503,586
1981	$336.90	$27.60	8.20%	$7.40	2.20%	556,814
1982	$362.50	$29.90	8.20%	$8.70	2.40%	612,496
1983	$387.30	$31.00	8.00%	$9.90	2.60%	647,449
1984	$412.60	$32.90	8.00%	$11.20	2.70%	682,764
1985	$447.00	$36.10	8.10%	$13.00	2.90%	744,208
1986	$487.20	$38.40	7.90%	$14.60	3.00%	800,880
1987	$523.80	$39.80	7.60%	$16.60	3.20%	858,687
1988	$558.10	$42.70	7.70%	$18.50	3.30%	951,335
1989	$599.60	$45.80	7.60%	$21.10	3.50%	1,078,920
1990	$660.80	$49.50	7.50%	$24.10	3.60%	1,148,702
1991	$723.80	$50.80	7.00%	$26.40	3.60%	1,219,014
1992	$777.20	$50.50	6.50%	$28.50	3.70%	1,295,150
1993	$821.70	$54.20	6.60%	$30.70	3.70%	1,369,185
1994	$865.20	$57.10	6.60%	$33.70	3.90%	1,476,621
1995	$902.50	$58.10	6.40%	$36.50	4.00%	1,585,586
1996	$939.00	$59.40	6.30%	$39.30	4.20%	1,646,020
1997	$980.30	$61.50	6.30%	$41.60	4.20%	1,743,643
1998	$1,033.70	$65.30	6.30%	$43.30	4.20%	1,816,931
1999	$1,101.70	$69.60	6.30%	$46.50	4.20%	1,893,115
2000	$1,189.80	$74.40	6.30%	$51.00	4.30%	1,933,503*

Source: Adapted from Spending Figures: Rubanov, Natasha and Mortenson, T., "Table 3.16: Selected Current Expenditures by Function of State and Local Governments: Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Income and Product Accounts." Oskaloossa, IA: Postsecondary Education Opportunity Letter, 2001.www.postsecondary.org; Prison and Jail Populations, 1980 to 2000, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001); 1952 to 1970, Justice Policy Institute (1999).

*This count of prison and jail inmates only includes citizens above age 18, including noncitizens and youth in detention. However, there are over 2 million people incarcerated in America. See also "Cellblocks or Classrooms? The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men," Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2002.

spending on colleges and universities doubled (from 3.5% in 1952 to 8.0% in 1980) while the percentage of spending on corrections remained essentially the same (from 1.5% in 1952 to 2.1% in 1980).

In the 1980s, in response to public concern about safety amidst a climate of zero tolerance, we began to see a much larger prison population than had existed historically. Between 1980 and 2000, the American jail and prison population quadrupled from 500,000 to 2 million prisoners. A prison building boom occurred as states, counties, and cities built hundreds of prisons, hired thousands of workers, and spent billions to feed new prisoners. Prison derbys were held by rural states to warehouse prisoners from other states as a source of revenue funding. As a result, the cost of the expanding corrections system became a larger share of state and local spending. As Table 9.1 shows, by the year 2000, while corrections consumed 4.3% of all state and local funding (a 104% increase since 1952), during the same period, higher education's share of all state and local spending dropped from its high of 8.2% in 1981 to 6.3% (a 23% drop since 1981 or a 21% drop since 1980).

Table 9.2 shows the percent change in spending on corrections and higher education for every state. For most states, the growth in funding for corrections dwarfed that of higher education.

Table 9.2. Change in Prison Funding Compared to Higher Education Spending by State: 1985–2000

State	*Change in State Higher Education Spending*	*Change in State Prison Spending*
AL	41%	107%
AK	-53%	45%
AR	32%	188%
AZ	50%	191%
CA	-16%	184%
CO	16%	366%
CT	37%	262%
DE	39%	156%
DC*	-7%	-5%
FL	88%	217%
GA*	93%	234%
HI	3%	164%
ID	64%	424%
IL	30%	110%
IN	39%	214%
IA	60%	107%
KS	30%	192%
KY	33%	164%
LA	6%	13%

Table 9.2. Change in Prison Funding Compared to Higher Education Spending by State: 1985–2000 (Cont.)

State	*Change in State Higher Education Spending*	*Change in State Prison Spending*
ME	30%	75%
MD	37%	29%
MA	16%	273%
MI	27%	227%
MN	73%	148%
MS*	34%	185%
MO	52%	236%
MT	–14%	181%
NE	41%	148%
NV*	105%	107%
NH*	4%	138%
NJ	44%	137%
NM*	49%	48%
NY	–25%	137%
NC	8%	149%
ND	–17%	250%
OH	38%	211%
OK**	64%	128%
OR	64%	314%
PA	25%	413%
RI	–2%	188%
SC	29%	113%
SD	2%	214%
TN	22%	74%
TX*	47%	346%
UT	48%	195%
VT	–3%	179%
VA	42%	76%
WA	13%	138%
WV*	25%	139%
WI	29%	274%
WY*	–15%	110%
Average Percent Change of States	29%	179%

Source: National Association of State Budget Officers, State Expenditure Reports, 1985, 2000 (1987, 2001).

* As some states did not publish fiscal data for 1985, the next available year for those states were utilized. ** See also "Cellblocks or Classrooms?: The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men," Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2002.

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On the average, state spending on corrections grew at six times the rate of higher education spending. Idaho increased its prison budget by 424%, followed by Pennsylvania (413%), Colorado (366%), Texas (346%), and Oregon (314%). Forty-five states increased spending on corrections by more than 100% during the period, and 18 states increased their spending by more than 200%. By contrast, only one state (Nevada) experienced a 100% increase in spending on higher education. A third of the states either spent less or experienced less than a 16% increase in spending for higher education (Justice Policy Institute, 2002).

Bear in mind that while funding for higher education is on the decline, as a result of a downturn in the economy, and our national political focus on wartime as opposed to peace time economy, the burden for the loss of funding is borne disproportionately by poor students and students of color. "Losing Ground: A National Status Report on the Affordability of American Higher Education," published by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2002), recently found that for low-income families the cost of paying the tuition at a four-year public institution increased from 13% of median family income in 1980 to 25% in 2000. At the same time, federal support for students through Pell Grants has not kept pace with tuition increases. In 1986, the average Pell Grant per recipient covered 98% of tuition in 1986, but by 1998 it covered only 57%. In the 1990s, federal financial aid shifted from grants to loans, increasing the debt load poor students must carry. It is the poorest students who are disproportionately affected by rising college and university costs.

Table 9.3 illustrates the fact that in 1999/2000, in 13 states, there were more African American men under the jurisdiction of state prison systems than in college (Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio, Delaware, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and Alaska). In Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, the difference between the African American male prison populations and higher education enrollment varies from a few hundred to 2,000. Washington, DC., reversed the trend in the early 1990s by having 500 more males enrolled in the University of the District of Columbia than in prison; however, the number of African American males in higher education in DC dropped more than the number of African American men in the prison system.

Over the last two decades, as illustrated in Table 9.4, 38 states (and the federal prison system) were estimated to have added more African American men to prison than were added to the enrollment in their higher education systems. Upon close examination, how states are choosing to spend their scare dollars disproportionately on African American men is alarming (Justice Policy Institute, 2002). In Ohio, for example, 38 times as many African American men were added to the prison system than to higher education (17,300 to 452) between 1980 and 2000. In New York, three times

Table 9.3. African American Men Enrolled in Higher Education and Estimates of African American Men in State and Federal Prison Systems and Jails

State/Jurisdiction	*Estimates of African American Men in Prison, 2000*	*African American Men in Higher Education, 1999*
Federal	50,100	652
AK*	600	384
AL	16,200	21,187
AR	6,200	6,415
AZ	3,500	5,638
CA	47,100	59,838
CO	3,700	4,594
CT*	7,900	5,187
DC*	6,900	7,451
DE	4,000	2,682
FL	37,000	37,437
GA	27,700	29,611
HI*	200	907
IA	1,800	2,562
ID	100	292
IL	27,600	34,838
IN	8,000	7,763
KS	3,000	4,230
KY	5,300	5,564
LA	25,000	20,624
MA	2,900	11,126
MD	17,300	22,919
ME	100	299
MI	24,300	21,454
MN	2,200	4,948
MO	11,600	11,216
MS	13,900	15,315
MT	0	147
NC	19,000	30,762
ND	0	265
NE	1,100	1,786
NH	100	573
NJ	18,100	15,083
NM	500	1,350
NV	2,500	2,708
NY	31,600	46,681

Table 9.3. African American Men Enrolled in Higher Education and Estimates of African American Men in State and Federal Prison Systems and Jails (Cont.)

State/Jurisdiction	*Estimates of African American Men in Prison, 2000*	*African American Men in Higher Education, 1999*
OH	23,200	20,074
OK	7,200	6,233
OR	1,300	1,701
PA	20,000	19,585
RI*	1,000	1,730
SC	14,200	15,282
SD	100	274
TN	10,500	14,775
TX	66,300	40,872
UT	400	591
VA	18,800	23,718
VT*	0	222
WA	3,000	5,859
WI	9.100	5,291
WV	600	2,158
WY	100	179

JPI-State/Federal Prison Estimate Totals	**602,900**	**603,032**
BJS Estimate for African American Men in Prison and Jail, June 30, 2000	**791,600**	
African American Men Incarceration vs. Education, 1999/2000	**791,600**	**603,032**
African American Men in Prison and Jail, 1993/4 (Post-Secondary Opportunity Estimates)	**678,300**	**549,600**

Sources: State estimates of prison populations by the Justice Policy Institute, and national estimates by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001); National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (2001); National Center on Education Statistics (2001). *Some states have unified jail-prison systems. State estimates were rounded to the nearest hundred. See also "Cellblocks or Classrooms?: The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men," Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2002.

as many African American males were added to the prison rolls as to higher education. Texas led the nation in adding African American men to prison by adding more than four times the number of African American men to its prison system (54,500) than to its colleges and universities (12,163).

Table 9.4. Three Times the Number of African American Men Added to State and Federal Prison Systems as Were Enrolled in Higher Education: 1980–2000

State/Jurisdiction	*Estimated Change in African American Male Prisoners*	*Change in African American Males Enrolled in Higher Education*
Federal	42,900	–4,292
AL	500	7,081
AK*	12,500	160
AR*	4,800	1,522
AZ	2,800	2,596
CA	39,400	–3,752
CO	3,200	2,138
CT*	6,100	1,740
DC	3,900	–4,071
DE*	3,200	1,218
FL	27,200	20,489
GA	20,800	15,203
HI	200	506
IA	1,300	729
ID	100	95
IL	20,700	6,444
IN	5,800	996
KS	2,200	1,247
KY	4,200	1,319
LA	18,800	6,426
MA	1,900	4,777
MD	11,900	8,696
ME	100	196
MI	16,100	1,307
MN	1,800	3,712
MO	9,400	2,403
MS	11,300	3,370
MT	0	31
NC	11,000	6,839
ND	0	134
NE	700	434
NH	100	165
NJ	14,400	3,024
NM	400	614
NV	1,900	1,496

Table 9.4. Three Times the Number of African American Men Added to State and Federal Prison Systems as Were Enrolled in Higher Education: 1980–2000 (Cont.)

State/Jurisdiction	*Estimated Change in African American Male Prisoners*	*Change in African American Males Enrolled in Higher Education*
NY	21,800	7,247
OH	17,300	452
OK	5,900	1,713
OR	1,000	781
PA	15,500	4,588
RI*	800	635
SC	9,700	2,664
SD	100	26
TN	7,500	1,934
TX	54,500	12,163
UT	300	244
VA	13,700	7,556
VT*	0	63
WA	2,200	2,297
WI	7,600	1,387
WV	400	502
WY	100	49
Total Change	460,000	139,293

Source: State estimates of prison populations by the Justice Policy Institute and national estimates by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001, 2000); National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (2001); National Center on Education Statistics (2001). *See also "Cellblocks or Classrooms?: The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men," Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2002.

As we can see in the tables provided, the progress made in improving African Americans' access to college has been eclipsed by the growth of the nation's Black male incarcerated population. Such conveyor belt justice ignores larger opportunity costs, our next focus of discussion.

CRIME AND SOCIALLY STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITY

There is a connection between the new statistics relating race, crime, incarceration rates, and long-term sentencing, and the routine experiences of a new group of youth seeking entry-level employment in the service sector. The National Bureau of Economic Research (Bound & Freeman, 1992) found that men jailed before 1981 worked 25–30% less than those who were never locked up. Fifty percent held a job before incarceration, but only 19% afterwards. The researchers found that the soaring rate of imprisonment accounted for nearly three-quarters of the sharp drop in employment of young Black dropouts in the decade of the 1980s.

An assessment of the political economy of urban America is instructive here. Research by Wilson (2000) details the declining influence of American cities, which provided the foundation for the New Federalism, an important political development that increased the significance of race and class issues in metropolitan America. For example, since the 1960s, the proportion of Whites inside central cities has decreased steadily, while the proportion of minorities has increased. In 1960, the nation's population was evenly divided between cities, suburbs, and rural areas. By 1990 both urban and rural populations declined, leaving suburbs with nearly half of the nation's population. As cities lost population, they become poorer and more minority in their racial and ethnic composition. Thus, in the eyes of many in the dominant population, minorities symbolize the ugly urban scene left behind. Today, the divide between the suburbs and city is in many respects a racial divide. Both the Reagan and Bush administrations in the 1980s, sharply cut spending on direct aid to cities including general revenue sharing, urban mass transit, public service jobs and job training, compensatory education, social service block grants, local public works, economic development assistance, and urban development action grants. The federal contribution to city budgets in 1980 was 18%, but by 1990, it had dropped to below 6.4% (Wilson, 2000). Cities and urban centers have become increasingly underserviced and many have been on the brink of bankruptcy or state takeover. Cities have therefore not been in a position to combat effectively four unhealthy social conditions that have emerged or become prominent since 1980: the outbreak of crack cocaine addiction and the murders and other violent crimes that have accompanied them; the AIDS epidemic and its escalating public health costs; chronic underachievement in urban schools; and the sharp rise in the homeless population not only for individuals, but for whole families (Caraley, 1992). The growing suburbanization of the population influences the extent to which national politicians will support increased federal aid to large cities and to the poor. Indeed, research associates the sharp drop in federal support for basic urban programs since 1980 with the declining political influence of cities and the rising influence of electoral coalitions in the suburbs (Weir, 1993). In each of the three presidential elections prior to the 1992 election, the Democratic presidential candidate scored huge majorities in the large cities only to lose an overwhelming majority of the states where these cities are located.

Economists and other social scientists have argued about the clear-cut relationship between national unemployment rates and crime (Elliott 1992; Sampson 1986; Fagan 1993). A crucial set of complications arises from the clumsiness of our standard measures of unemployment. At first glance, there might seem to be few things simpler than to determine what it means to be unemployed, but in fact, as critics have pointed out, the conventional definition of unemployment embodied in the official rate obscures more than it reveals. To begin with, it lumps together what are actually widely different experiences among people with very different propensities toward serious crime. In terms of its effects on crime rates, unemployment clearly means one thing in the case of a 40-year-old machinist with three children, a mortgage, and a 20-year work history who has just lost his job, and another if we are talking about an 18-year-old inner-city dropout who has never held a job for more than three months, may never in the future, and knows it. The official rate tells us nothing by itself about the differences between the pain of being out of work for six months and the demoralization of a lifetime with minimal prospects for work. Similarly, because the rate is national, it obscures differences at the level of local communities, where arguably they count the most (Sampson &Wilson, 1993). National changes in unemployment may have little effect on the job situation in communities that face persistently high unemployment through good times and bad. When we do focus on specific neighborhoods, the connections between crime and unemployment emerge dramatically. Sampson and Wilson (1993) also found that victimization rates were 80% higher for crimes of theft and 40% higher for crimes of violence in urban neighborhoods with high unemployment than in those with low unemployment.

Despite the overall unemployment rates in our society, another crucial trend is the simultaneous rise in the unemployment rate for youth, particularly non-Whites, as we witness an even more precipitous drop in their labor force participation. The most powerful associations between joblessness and youth crime emerge when Sampson and Wilson (1993) divided their sample into youths who were in the labor force (either working or looking for work) and those who were out of it, those who neither had jobs nor sought them. This distinction is a more accurate predictor of urban youth crime rates than the more conventional contrast between youths who were working and those who were not. In short, what seems most closely related to crime among urban youths was not just being out of work, but being so far out of work that one ceases to look for it. It would appear that what principally influences urban youth crime is not the current state of the economy so much as the long-term experience of fundamentally constricted economic opportunities and pronounced academic failure, both leading to an experience that convinces many urban minority youth that not much is to be gained by looking for a job.

Clearly we need to broaden the focus of investigation beyond the conventional measure of unemployment to include other forms of joblessness. But we need to broaden the terms of our discussion in another way as well; for what the narrow emphasis on unemployment ignores is the larger, ultimately more crucial issue of how the quality of work affects the crime rate. One of the most consistent findings in recent research is unemployment is less strongly associated with serious crime than underemployment—the prospect of working, perhaps forever, in jobs that cannot provide a decent or stable livelihood, a sense of social purpose, a modicum of self-esteem. It is not so much individual unemployment per se that causes crime, but rather the failure to find relatively satisfying high-wage employment (Sampson, 1986; Sampson & Wilson, 1993). What is at issue is economic viability rather than just employment per se. The idea that crime might be linked with the larger problem of inadequate and unstable work, not just the absence of work altogether, is not new. In 1878, Carroll D. Wright's admonishment that an economy, that condemns many to drudgery as well as to frequent unemployment, will be neither just nor safe, still holds true today. It is the condition of being locked into secondary labor markets—low-level, poorly paying, unstable jobs that cannot support a family and that offer little opportunity for advancement—that is most likely to breed crime.

While the causal relationship between crime and unemployment is complex, it cannot be dismissed. It is not only that people who have reasonably well-paying jobs are less likely to commit crimes than those who do not, for work is a fundamental aspect of social control, of social organization in a community (Wilson, 2000). But the fact is that unemployment is a risk factor for crime (McCord, 1994). Patterned unemployment, through time and across racial and ethnic divisions, is a cause. Being an urban minority male youth is also a risk factor. Jobless urban youth, who tend to be impetuous to engage in male bonding activities are likely to be free from ordinary social constraints. Nor are they likely to be deterred by the threat of imprisonment: partly because they are not long-range cost–benefit calculators, with the same points of reference than legislators employ, but mostly because they have few alternatives (Duster, 1995).

The result is a 500% increase in incarceration with more than 1.3 million inmates in prisons and jails, with the burden of increased incarceration falling most heavily on poor Black and Latino communities (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002). Such overuse of incarceration not only reduces its stigma but its deterrent power as well. As a well-known social critic suggested, years ago being called a jailbird was a shameful label, a derogatory characterization (Raspberry, 2002). Today, however, we are fast approaching the time in which it is unique to find a young Black urban male who has *not* been incarcerated.

Let us not dismiss the fact that high levels of incarceration have such a destabilizing effect on impoverished communities that the most basic underpinnings of informal social control and social cohesion are not only damaged, but destroyed in minority communities. The effect of taking away huge numbers of Black males are enormous. As one takes away sons from mothers, husbands from wives, brothers from sisters, and children from fathers, we also destroy informal mechanisms of social cohesion and social integration; first, in families, then in communities. Social cohesion acts as a form of social control, of social organization that serves to build discipline, order, pride, a sense of family and belonging and the human need to feel connected, and to build the very structures that bind and sustain a group to elevate succeeding generations. As a result, without social cohesion and bonding to the mores of the larger society, social policy, as exercised throughout our criminal justice system, our juvenile justice system reproduces the very dynamics it seeks to punish, the very dynamics that sustain crime. The social and political consequences of such regressive social policy is all the more profound when we remember the long-term effects, for incarceration, for the individual, and for the society. In many states, once convicted, felons lose their right to vote and cannot access public funding to attend school. The drug war's influence on our nation's political leaders has been profound. While our politicians have stripped civil liberties from drug offenders, convicted armed robbers or rapists can apply for higher education or welfare benefits (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002).

CONCLUSION

We know that urban Black males, in the lower economic strata, find themselves at a disadvantage in the struggle to achieve the goals idealized in the larger society (Kobrin, 1951; Merton, 1957; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). These differences are translated into conduct through the general struggle for those economic symbols that signify a desirable position in the larger social order. Those occupying disadvantageous positions are involved in a conflict between the goals assumed to be attainable in a free society and those actually attainable for a large portion of the population. It is understandable, then, that the economic position of persons living in the areas of least opportunity should be translated at times into unconventional conduct, in an effort to reconcile the idealized status and their practical prospects for attaining this status. Since, in our culture, status is determined largely in economic terms, the contrast between differing economic status becomes a defining differential. The value system in support of criminal behavior becomes the focal point in shaping individual life patterns and life choices, since it is only where such a system exists that a person, through criminal activity, may acquire the material goods so essential to status in our society, and at the same time, increase rather than lose one's prestige in the smaller groups of which one has become an integral part (Merton, 1957; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Perhaps former President William Jefferson Clinton (1994) said it best:

> ... as you demand tougher penalties for those who choose violence, let us also remember how we came to this sad point.... We have seen a stunning and simultaneous breakdown of community, family and work. This has created a vast vacuum which has been filled by violence and drugs and gangs. So I ask you to remember that even as we say no to crime, we must give people, especially our young people, something to say yes to.

As our society approaches a majority/minority population, the opportunity cost, the social cost of investing in prisons as opposed to education, is enormous. One new prison costs more than $333 million. That money could put more than 8,000 teachers in school classrooms or support nearly 90,000 children in Head Start programs (Duster, 1995). For the cost of imprisoning one person for one year, the state of California could educate 10 community college students, five California State University students, or two University of California students ("Changing priorities," 1994).

The seminal work of Emile Durkheim (1961) informs us that social control and social cohesion in any society arise not from the pain and suffering punishment imposes, but by binding the individual to the social group, by making his society an integral part of him. Young urban Black males who are largely part of the drug trade are also part of a generation who have learned to see crime as economic opportunity, and as a means of gaining prestige and identity. Serious violent offenses occur primarily among teenagers and young Black men in their 20s, with the increased violence largely attributable to the epidemic of firearms deaths. Reasoning can never excuse criminal behavior by Black urban males, but it should intensify our need to break the cycle of poverty, chronic academic failure, abuse, and violence that dominates their lives. The unavoidable fact is that neighborhoods nor societies are well served when our young Black boys perceive that going to jail may be a more likely prospect than going to school (Yeakey, 2002).

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CHAPTER 10

SPORTS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Athletic Investment and Mobility Aspirations of Ethnically Diverse High School Students

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BACKGROUND

The "American dream" is characterized by the belief that America is a nation of opportunity, where personal striving leads to upward mobility and improved lifestyles and life chances. For many Americans this "dream" is elusive. Individual access to the American dream has always been influenced by membership in particular racial, ethnic, and gender groups. The chances of attaining the American dream for ethnic, racial, and other minority groups are circumscribed by structured social inequality in which race and ethnicity play a critical role in the nation's ranking system (Yetman, 1999). This chapter examines the relationship between participation

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Surmounting All Odds, pages 215–250
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in school sports and adolescents' perceptions of the American opportunity structure. Put differently, we consider whether sport participation influences the development of positive perceptions of future life chances among adolescents, thus increasing their perceived chances of attaining the American dream.

The American dream implies the attainment of a certain level of economic, social and personal success, aspects of which can be referred to as one's *life chances*. The concept of life chances was introduced by Max Weber (1978) to describe the probability or chance that an individual will attain power, social honor, and the economic and cultural goods valued in a society, which translate to an overall quality of life. Life chances are determined by an individual's access to economic and social commodities, which translate into social mobility.

Adolescent Life Chances and Future Outlook

The global *well-being* or *life chance* construct considered here reflects multidimensional components of the American dream. The concept of life chances includes not only economic conditions but also opportunities to fulfill other nonmaterial interests such as personal and social relationships. Weber's (1978) concept of life chances includes the individual's perceptions of the opportunities available to them within a social structure. Perceived life chances can be described as the way in which people analyze their opportunities for the realization of goals, and the satisfaction of needs within a social structure. An individual's perception of their life chances has important implications for the content and extent of future goals and the amount of effort put forth to attain those goals. Thus, the perception of future life chances is especially important for the development of an overall future outlook among adolescents and young adults.

Adolescents' decisions regarding education, career, and lifestyle significantly influence their later adult lives. Adolescents are faced with a timetable for achieving particular tasks such as graduating from high school, taking required steps for admission into a college or university, completing a degree, and entering the workforce. Thus, adolescents' perceptions of their life chances and evaluation of their ability to realize their goals affects the goal-setting process and the effort and commitment put forth in attaining future goals (Nurmi, 1991; Nuttin, 1984; Trommsdorff, 1994). A future outlook among adolescents develops from thinking about, planning, and anticipating future outcomes (Nurmi, 1991). Adolescents' concerns about the future are related to important life events that will affect them into adulthood. Such life events include graduating from high school, going to college, choosing a career, and starting a family. The specific life events that are examined in future orientation (psychological) research correspond with the life chances (sociological) research. How adolescents see their future or their future outlook will be used as a broad framework within which to examine life-chance perceptions.

LITERATURE

Research on individual perceptions of their future life chances has been conducted in both the sociological and psychological traditions. Among sociologists, this research has often focused on individual aspirations for upward social mobility—educational attainment, occupational success, and social status—and attributed causal explanations for variations in aspirations largely to social-contextual factors. Psychologists examining individual orientations toward the future, or future outlook, often focus on personality traits of individuals as primary causal factors. This chapter examines a conceptual framework that integrates key elements of these two important disciplinary traditions.

Research in the Psychological Tradition

Nurmi (1991) defines a future outlook as a process that occurs within a framework of thinking about, planning, and anticipating outcomes in the future. The content of future concerns for adolescents include the major developmental tasks of late adolescence and early adulthood —education/schooling, future occupation/profession, and family/marriage (Nurmi, Poole, & Kalakoski 1994). Nurmi (1991) describes a future orientation as a complex, multidimensional, and multistage phenomenon that includes motivation, planning, and evaluation. After an individual sets their goals, and constructs a planning strategy based on choosing the most efficient path for attaining their goals; they then have to evaluate the possibility of actualizing their goals. This final "evaluation" stage focuses on two personality traits: causal attribution and self-concept.

The processes involved in future thinking include an assessment of the opportunity structure (Nurmi, 1991; Nuttin, 1984; Trommsdorff, 1983). Adolescents assess the possibility of achieving goals based on a personal assessment of opportunities available to them (Seginer & Halabi, 1991; Trommsdorff, 1994). Young people have to believe in the openness of the opportunity structure in order to work toward future educational and occupational goals (Simmons & Rosenberg, 1971). Youths of color or those from disadvantaged backgrounds may hold different assessments of opportunities available to them. Thus their assessment of the openness of American society reflects their belief in the opportunities available to them or members of their group and their chances of reaching desired and important goals.

The research examining the future outlook of adolescents finds that minority and/or low-income youths are particularly susceptible to adopting a weaker and less positive future outlook (Lamm, Schmidt, & Trommsdorff, 1976; Seginer, 1988; Seginer & Halabi, 1991). The future outlook of ethnic and racial minorities may be restricted by negative personal (discrimination and racism) and historical (slavery and oppression) experiences as well as some of the social problems (poverty and unemployment) faced by these groups.

Research has also shown that males and females differ in their assessment of the future. Females tend to become less optimistic about their future as they get older, whereas males become more optimistic as they get older (Nurmi, 1991). Males and females also differ in the content of their future concerns (Nurmi, 1987; Nurmi et. al, 1994). Using an open-ended questionnaire that asks teenage respondents to list their hopes and fears for the future, Nurmi and colleagues (1994) found that females listed more concerns or fears about future family and marriage than males, while males listed more concerns about property and leisure activities than females. In the same study, males reported less concern about future occupation than females; females and males reported an equal amount of concerns regarding education. The finding that females have more fears regarding future occupation than males may suggest an awareness among girls of barriers to upward occupational mobility because of gender discrimination.

Lamm and colleagues' (1976) examination of future orientation among middle- and lower-class adolescents indicates that middle-class adolescents are more likely than lower-class adolescents to believe that the materialization of their hopes is dependent on themselves. They also report that middle-class adolescents had more long term goals compared to lower-class peers. They found no major differences in the optimism level of lower- and middle-class adolescents. The authors believe the level of optimism and aspirations among lower-class adolescents will probably decrease with age, as the barriers to success present themselves.

Simmons and Rosenberg's (1971) examination of children's view of the opportunity structure found that across class lines, schoolchildren believe that there are barriers to equal opportunity in American society. The majority of students' attribute blocked opportunity to socioeconomic, racial, or ethnic disadvantages. The study distinguishes between the child's view of the opportunity structure in general and their assessment of personal opportunity. The results demonstrate that although most children do not believe that equal opportunity is available for all people, the children remained optimistic about their own personal life chances. This finding suggests that young people's views about their own future opportunities or chances may be resilient to their views of a "blocked" opportunity structure.

The study of differences in aspirations and expectations of working class and more affluent youth suggests that at very young ages, children are conscious of the barriers to success for certain groups. Cook and colleagues (1996) examined the occupational aspirations and expectations among inner-city boys and boys from an affluent background. The findings reveal that the two groups were closer in their aspirations for future occupations than they were on their expectations for attaining a future occupation. Aspirations in this context are seen as being dependent on cultural influences, including family structure and support. Expectations are seen as dependent on structural influences such as family socioeconomic background and neighborhood environment (Cook et al., 1996).

Research in the Sociological Tradition

Studies of social mobility in American society focus on how individuals are distributed in the stratification system. Social scientists typically study how individuals attain status in society, as measured by their level of occupational attainment (prestige, income, or job authority). Social mobility is also measured by the differences between the social status levels of parents and their children. Explanations for the distribution of individuals in the stratification system can emphasize either continuity across generations (class reproduction) or intergenerational social mobility (Kerckhoff, 1995).

An individual's economic class position and social status within the American stratification system determines their life chances or opportunities (Weber, 1978). Life chances include material outcomes such as having a well-paying job, having good health, and being able to own a home and live wherever one chooses, as well as nonmaterial outcomes such as social honor and prestige, being respected in one's community, and having a fulfilling family life and social relationships. Individuals who are part of the privileged group (those with the most wealth, status, and power) have access to the economic and cultural capital that is valued in society and thus they benefit from having the most unrestricted life chances (Dahrendorf, 1979).

The Wisconsin "status attainment" model suggests that the formation of status aspirations and the behaviors that can facilitate or hinder their realization have a major influence on status attainment. This model demonstrates the manner in which interpersonal factors such as status aspirations and significant other influences mediate the influence of social structural variables such as background socioeconomic status and mental ability on behavior geared toward status attainment (Sewell, Haller, & Portes 1969).

Haller and Portes (1973) note that in this model, status aspirations and the behavior that facilitates their realization greatly affect educational and occupational attainment. Aspirations, formed by the individual about his/herself and through the influences of significant others, are shown to be a major influence on status attainment. Variables such as academic performance and encouragement from significant others are found to facilitate the establishment of status aspirations.

Dawkins (1989) examines a model of the occupational aspiration process, which assesses the impact of social/psychological factors, educational plans, and individual and family background factors on occupational aspirations. This model extends the examination of significant other influences to include parents' aspirations for their children as family socialization variables on the maintenance of plans for professional careers. The findings of this study, based on a nationally representative sample of African American young adults, reveal that mother's aspirations for their children are important factors in the development of occupational aspirations. The results of this study highlight the positive influence of African American family socialization factors in the formation of status aspirations and the status attainment process.

Peer groups can also influence the future orientation of adolescents. Peers influence adolescents' future orientation by providing an opportunity to compare one's behavior with others. Peers provide incentives for thinking about current life events with others at the same stage of life (Nurmi, 1991).

Sports and Adolescent Life Chances/Future Outlook

Athletic participation is believed to have a positive effect on the academic performance of students, which leads to a more positive evaluation of their life chances (Trommsdorff, 1983). Academic performance is an essential component of the development of adolescents' positive future outlook. Many researchers have found that athletic participation among adolescents and young adults has a positive effect on educational achievements and aspirations. Previous studies have shown that participation in sports has a positive effect on adolescents' high school grades and academic self-esteem (Braddock, 1981; Marsh, 1993), educational aspirations (Braddock, 1980; Picou, 1978; Rehberg & Schafer, 1968), and college enrollment (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1990).

The development of a positive future outlook also depends a great deal on the social environment of adolescents. Social capital, particularly parental support and involvement, and peer group influence plays an important role in the positive evaluation of attaining future goals. Children who perceive their parents as supportive have higher levels of achievement and have a more positive assessment of their future (Nurmi, 1987, 1991; Seginer, 1988; Trommsdorff, 1983). O'Bryan and Braddock (2000), for example, recently found that parental educational involvement is higher for adolescents involved in school sports than among parents of their noninvolved peers.

An adolescent's peer group exerts a major influence on their future outlook. Peer groups give adolescents the opportunity to compare their behavior and thinking with others of the same age. Peers can influence an adolescent's future educational and occupational aspirations (Nurmi, 1991). For example, Coleman's (1961) important study, *Adolescent Society*, found a strong relationship between athletic participation and membership in the leading crowd. The important implication of this finding is that the "leading crowd" is usually made up of middle-class, college-bound students, and "leading crowd" peers affect the college aspirations of student athletes. Aspirations for college are higher for student athletes than for their nonathlete counterparts (Picou & Curry, 1974; Rehberg & Schafer, 1968; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1990; Spreitzer & Pugh, 1973). The higher educational aspirations of student athletes can be attributed in part to their membership in the "leading crowd." Thus it is believed that the behaviors and beliefs that an adolescent's peer group display will have an effect on their educational aspirations and perceptions of future life chances.

A positive outlook toward the future stems from a positive self-concept, internal locus of control, high level of academic achievement and social capital. A youth may be aware that it is harder for individuals from lower class and ethnic and racial minority groups to "make it," but if they believe that they have control over their future outcomes, they will continue to hold a positive view of their future life chances. A positive perception of one's life chances plays an important role in the future outlook of adolescents by affecting their behavior, motivation and commitment to attaining future goals (Nurmi, 1991; Nuttin, 1984; Trommsdorff, 1994). The development of a positive outlook toward the future is especially important for females and youths of color who can become discouraged from striving for future goals as a consequence of an opportunity structure that restricts certain groups from access to success and upward mobility. Therefore, it is crucial for members of these groups to develop a positive future outlook, which facilitates continued striving toward educational, occupational, and other goals. It is believed that participation in sports can function to enhance and increase goal setting, planning, and the positive evaluation of the attainment of future goals. Participation in sports can serve this purpose by enhancing the variables (self-concept and internal locus of control, social capital and academic performance) that lead to a positive evaluation of future life chances.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING FUTURE OUTLOOK

This study is concerned with how young people evaluate or assess their future life chances. For purposes of this study, life chance perceptions are considered an indicator of adolescent's future outlook. The factors that contribute to an adolescent's evaluation of the attainment of future goals include *personal resources* (e.g., self-concept and internal locus of control), *academic performance* (e.g., test scores and grades), and *social capital* (e.g., parental educational involvement and peers' pro-academic beliefs).

Adolescent sport participation is believed to affect the life-chance perceptions of high school seniors by positively influencing personal resources, academic achievement, and social capital, which are key components of future life-chance perceptions. Figure 10.1 displays our conceptual model of athletic participation's influence on adolescent's life-chance perceptions. The mediating factors described in this section (personal resources, academic performance and social capital) have been shown to be predictive of adolescent perceptions of future life chances.

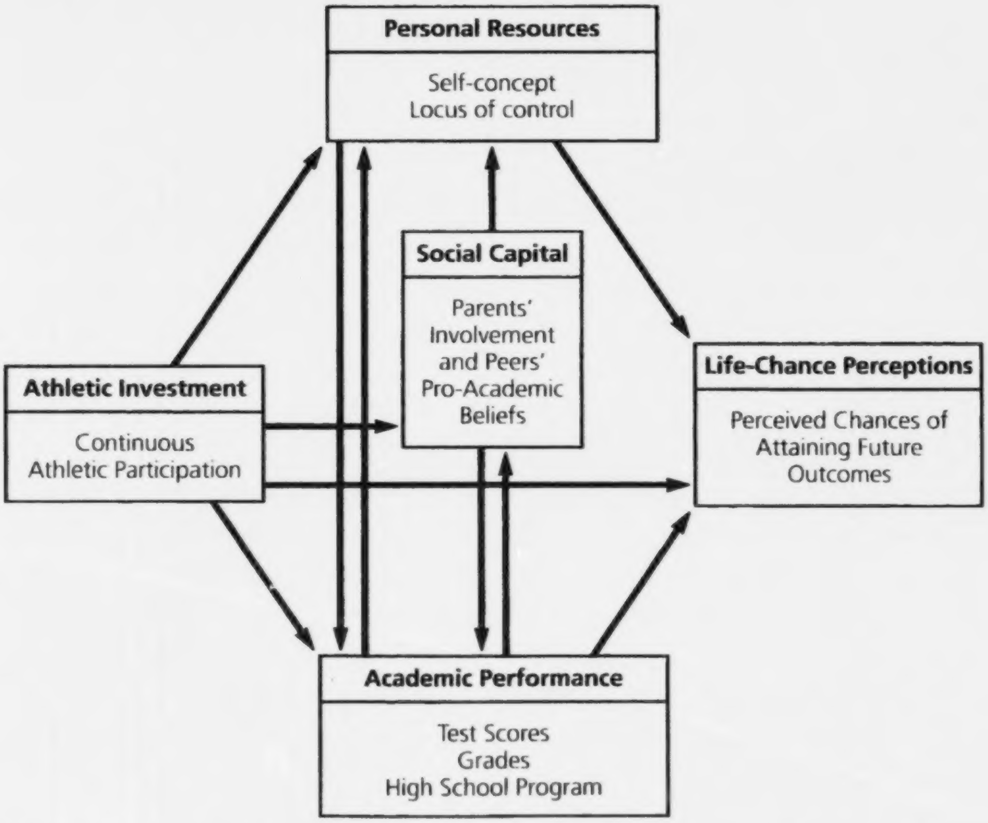
Personal Resources
Self-concept
Locus of control
Social Capital
Parents' Involvement and Peers' Pro-Academic Beliefs
Athletic Investment
Continuous Athletic Participation
Life-Chance Perceptions
Perceived Chances of Attaining Future Outcomes
Academic Performance
Test Scores
Grades
High School Program

Figure 10.1. A model of athletic participation's influences on adolescents' life-chance perceptions.

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Personal Resources

In the evaluation stage of the future outlook process, the personal resources of self-concept and internal locus of control significantly influence assessment of future opportunities for attaining goals and fulfilling interests. Causal attribution and self-concept are each dependent on the other. The belief that one has control over their future is based on a positive evaluation of one's power and competence to influence future outcomes (Nurmi, 1991). An internal locus of control and a positive self-concept allow for the setting of high-level goals, serve as a motivating factor to work toward those goals, and result in a positive evaluation of the realizability of those goals (Nurmi et al., 1994).

The examination of a positive future outlook is most relevant for this study in the role it plays in the process of the self-regulation of behavior. The fundamental connection between a positive outlook and behavior is the idea that people's actions are greatly influenced by their expectations about the consequences of those actions. Scheier and Carver (1992) view people's expectations as a major determinant of two classes of behavior: continued striving versus giving up and turning away. An optimistic outlook is conducive to viewing desired goals and outcomes as attainable and continuing to strive toward those outcomes even when progress becomes difficult or slow. Pessimism, on the other hand, contributes to negative expectations of outcomes, which leads to giving up and a retreat from the process of attainment.

Participation in sports has been shown to enhance self-concept and locus of control in adolescents (Marsh, 1993). Athletes in high school enjoy a high social status, which positively affects self-concept; in many instances athletes are among the most admired individuals in the school (Coleman, 1961). Researchers that have found positive associations between participation in sports and self-concept stress that an important function of a positive self-concept is that it increases educational aspirations (Marsh, 1993; Picou, 1978; Spreitzer & Pugh, 1973).

Academic Performance

According to Nurmi and colleagues (1994), people evaluate their chances of realizing their goals and plans according to their present view of their skills and competence. Thus, academic performance has a significant impact on the future outlook and life-chance perceptions of students. Individuals who have a positive view of their academic skills are more likely to have a positive evaluation of the realization of future academic goals and other goals. For adolescents, academic performance is the main criteria used to evaluate the skills and competence necessary for future success. The specific measures used to evaluate academic performance are typically grades received and standardized test scores.

Academic performance is related to personal resources in that students with a positive self-concept and internal locus of control perform better in academic-related tasks (Curry et. al., 1997). Academic performance also affects the self-concept and causal attribution of individuals. Students who perform well academically have been shown to have higher levels of self-esteem and be more internal in their causal attribution than their lower-achieving peers (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Finn & Rock, 1997). The educational level and performance of individuals affect their assessment of future success. This is because in our society, high academic achievement and high level of educational status lead to higher status occupations. Trommsdorff (1983) found among adults and adolescents that those with higher levels of education and academic achievement were also more optimistic about their future.

Much of the literature on minority students' academic achievement focuses on the poor record of success of minority youths (Arellano & Padilla, 1996). Minority youths are more likely to have negative and adverse school experiences. African American and Latino youth experience institutional and social racism and school practices such as tracking that lowers academic performance and expectations and accounts to a large degree to academic failure among African American and Latino youth (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Kerckhoff, 1995; Ogbu, 1991).

Arellano and Padilla (1996) suggest that the study of academic success of minority students should be structured to examine the variables that provide successful students with protective mechanisms to achieve in the face of adversity. Rutter's (1987) study on resilience stresses the importance of discovering protective processes that protect individuals against risk associated with adversity. Participation in school-based athletic programs is believed to contribute to minority students' effective management of adverse and stressful conditions within the school environment.

A relationship between participation in sports and academic performance has been found in previous studies. Braddock et al. (1991) and Hawkins, Royster, and Braddock (1992) found that athletic investment, defined as a commitment to and investment of time, energy, and other resources into school athletics, contributes to African American students' effective management of stressful conditions within the school environment by increasing pro-academic investment behaviors and beliefs. Examples of the pro-academic behaviors and beliefs that were found to be positively related to participation in sports are attending class regularly, showing interest in class, and being prepared for class, among other academic investment indicators.

Marsh (1993) found that participation in sports during high school is highly correlated with social and academic self-concept, educational aspirations, being on the academic track and other pro-academic behaviors as well as parental educational aspirations and involvement. Marsh concludes that these relationships suggest that participation in sports lead to an increased commitment to, involvement with, and identification with school and school values.

Previous studies have found that participation in school sports has the strongest effect on aspirations for those students who could be considered at risk for school failure and would otherwise not be on a college track (Picou & Curry, 1974; Rehberg & Schafer, 1968; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1990; Spreitzer & Pugh, 1973). These at-risk students include those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, those that have a low level of academic performance, those that do not receive encouragement from parents to continue education beyond high school, and ethnic and racial minorities.

In addition to having a positive effect on academic aspirations, participation in sports has been shown to increase effective strategies for performing in stressful situations. Student athletes are found to have higher levels of hope, which is defined by Curry and colleagues (1997) as consisting of setting goals, constructing pathways to achieve those goals, and determined action toward the attainment of goals. The high levels of hope found among student athletes compared to nonathlete students predicted superior performance in athletic and academic tasks.

Social Capital

In this study, social capital as it relates to the development of life-chance perceptions will be examined in the form of family and peer influences. The important effect of social capital on the aspirations and future outlook of young people has been advanced by studies in many areas. In status attainment studies, parents and significant others play a major role in the formation of adolescents' aspirations, which lead to educational and occupational attainment. In future outlook literature, socialization in the family and among peers plays a crucial role in shaping the future outlook of adolescents. Essentially, children who perceive their parents as supportive develop a more positive and hopeful view of their future (Trommsdorff, 1983).

Parental influence is a very important factor in the construction of aspirations and optimism toward the future that allow children to work toward their goals. Parental involvement and support has an effect on the future goals children set for themselves as well as their beliefs about the possibility for the realization of those goals (Nurmi, 1987, 1991). Positive and encouraging feedback from parents is likely to increase the optimism of children's beliefs about their future. These beliefs play an important role in the development of self-concept and causal attribution (Trommsdorff, 1983).

Parental support and involvement is a reciprocal process in which adolescents' academic behavior and abilities influence the level of parental involvement. High parental expectations and level of educational involvement are associated with adolescents' educational aspirations and academic performance (Seginer, 1988). Parental educational expectations affect academic performance through achievement support behavior, which includes the interest and involvement of parents in the learning and school activities of the child. High parental expectations and aspirations for their child increase the child's aspirations and expectations of him/herself (Seginer, 1988).

METHODS

This study examines the effect of participation in school sports on the life chance perceptions of ethnically diverse male and female 12th-grade students. The research questions that guide this study are as follows: Does participation in school-based sports have an effect on the life-chance perceptions of 12th-grade students? Does the effect of participation in school sports on the life-chance perceptions of students vary by gender? This study is interested in how athletic investment may affect the personal resources, social capital, and academic achievement of students, all of which contribute to the development and positive view of their future life chances.

Data

The data for this study are taken from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The base year survey was conducted in 1988 when the students were in eighth grade. Two (high school) follow-up surveys were conducted. The first follow-up occurred in 1990 when the respondents were in 10th grade, and the sample was surveyed again in 1992 when the respondents were in 12th grade.

There are 16,489 12th-grade respondents. The sample is gender-balanced, with females comprising 50.7% of the sample, and males 49.3% of the total sample of 12th-grade students. Regarding the ethnic/racial makeup of the sample, those students that define their race as White comprise 65.9% of the total number of students in the 12th-grade sample. The next largest racial group is Hispanic, making up 14.2% of the sample of students, 11.3% of the students define themselves as Black, 7.2% define themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.3% define themselves as Native American/Alaskan Native. This study will focus on outcome data from students in the 12th grade, but includes predictor measures taken from the first and second waves of the survey.

Measures

Dependent Variable. The dependent measure, *life-chance perceptions*, is assessed by a likert-type scale consisting of 12 items that ask the respondent to assess their chances of achieving particular future outcomes. The life-chance perception scale has a standardized alpha coefficient of .83. The items that make up the life-chance perception scale ask the respondents: Think about how you see your future. What are the chances... (a) you will have graduated from high school? (b) you will go to college (c) you will have a job that pays well? (d) you will be able to own your own home? (e) you will have a job that you enjoy doing? (f) you will have a happy family life? (g) you will stay in good health most of the time? (h) you will be able to live wherever you want in the country? (i) you will be respected in your community? (j) you will have good friends you can count on? (k) life will turn out better for you than it has for your parents? (l) your children will have a better life than you had?

The possible responses to these items range from a very low to a very high (1= very low, 2 = low, 3 = 50/50, 4 = high, 5 = very high) chance of achieving a particular future outcome. Responses were dichotomized to reflect an assessment of either low or high chances for achieving future outcomes. The low category (0 = low) includes (1= very low, 2 = low, and 3 = 50/50) to reflect low chances of achieving future outcomes. The high category (1 = high) includes (4 = high, 5 = very high) to reflect high chances of achieving future outcomes. The response of (3 =50/50) is grouped in the low category because it is indicative of uncertainty regarding the chance of achieving future outcomes. According to Trommsdorff (1994), thinking about, planning, and evaluating one's future is aimed at reducing uncertainty about the future. A response of 50/50 indicates uncertainty and does not indicate an optimistic assessment of achieving future outcomes. The recoding of the responses in this manner allows for the analysis of the responses as reflecting either low (0) or high (1) chances of achieving future outcomes.

Independent Variable. Participation in school-based varsity athletics is believed to have an effect on the life-chance perceptions of 12th-grade students and is the main independent variable in this study. Varsity athletic participation will be measured by cumulative participation in varsity athletics over a five-year period between middle school and high school. Athletic participation is measured by the respondent's report of whether he/she participated in school varsity sports in the base year wave (8th grade), the first follow-up (10th grade), and the second follow-up (12th grade). A cumulative varsity sport participation index was constructed with a range from 0 = did not participate in varsity sports during 8th, 10th, or 12th grade, 1 = participated in varsity sports in one of the three years, 2 = participated in varsity sports in two of the three years, 3 = participated in varsity sports in all three years.

Mediating Variables. The mediating variables that will be examined in this study include measures of academic performance, personal resources, and social capital. The 10th grade mediating variables that will be examined along with athletic participation are also potentially important predictors of life-chance perceptions.

Academic Performance Measures

The indicators of academic performance examined in this study include test scores, grades received in four major subject areas (math, English, history, and science) and type of high school program.

Tenth-grade *test scores* are measured using a quartile index created by NCES of 10th-grade student standardized achievement test scores in reading and math (1 = low, 2 = middle, 3 = high, 4 = very high).

Tenth-grade *course grades* are measured using students' self-report of the grades they receive in the 10th grade in four major subjects (math, English, history, and science). The possible responses range from 1 = mostly A's, 2 = half A's and half B's, 3 = mostly B's, 4 = half B's and half C's, 5 = mostly C's, 6 = half C's and half D's, 7 = mostly D's, 8 = mostly below D's.

High school program will be measured using students' self-report of the 10th-grade curriculum program in which they are enrolled. The possible responses to this item range from 1 = general program, 2 = academic program, 3 = vocational/technical program, 4 = other program. The responses were dichotomized into 0 = nonacademic, 1 = academic. The 0 = nonacademic category includes 1 = general program, 3 = vocational/technical program, 4 = other program. The 1 = academic program category includes 2 = academic program. The responses were recoded in this manner to compare those respondents that are enrolled in an academic program and those that are in nonacademic or other programs.

Personal Resource Measures

Two personality traits that are believed to have an effect on the life-chance perceptions of adolescents are self-concept and locus of control. An adolescent's self-concept and causal attribution serve as personal resources, which allow for a positive evaluation of the extent to which they have control over their future.

Tenth-grade *self-concept* is measured using a quartile index created by NCES (1 = low, 2 = middle, 3 = high, 4 = very high). The items used to create the self-concept index are: (a) I feel good about myself, (b) I feel I am a person of worth, the equal of other people, (c) I am able to do things as well as most other people, (d) on the whole, I am satisfied with myself, (e) I feel useless at times, (f) at times I feel I am no good at all, (g) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Tenth-grade *locus of control* is measured using a NCES quartile index (1 = low, 2 = middle, 3 = high, 4 = very high). The items used to create the locus of control index are: (a) I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking, (b) in my life, good luck is more important than hard work for success, (c) every time I try to get ahead, something or somebody stops me, (d) my plans hardly ever work out, so planning only makes me unhappy, (e) when I make plans, I am almost certain I can make them work, (f) chance and luck are very important for what happens in my life.

Social Capital Measures

Socialization in the family and among peers are important aspects of the social capital received by adolescents, shaping their future outlook (Trommsdorff, 1983). The indicators of social capital that will be examined in this study are parents' educational aspirations for their children, and pro-academic peer beliefs.

The index of *parent's educational aspirations* for their children is measured using the student's response to the following questions: How far in school do you think your father wants you to go? The same question is asked for the student's mother: How far in school do you think your mother wants you to go? The possible responses for both questions range from 1 = less than high school graduation, 2 = graduate from high school, 3 = vocational school after high school, 4 = attend 2-year college, 5 = attend 4-year college, 6 = graduate from college, 7 = post-graduate education.

The *pro-academic peer* index is constructed from five items, which ask the student to rate the importance their friends place on pro-academic behaviors and beliefs. The peer index that was created has a standardized alpha of .81. The five items ask: Among friends, how important is it to... (a) attend class regularly? (b) study? (c) get good grades? (d) finish high school? (e) continue education past high school? The possible responses to the items are 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important. The responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable 0 = not very important and 1 = very important. The 0 = not very important category includes 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important. The 1 = very important category includes 3 = very important. The pro-academic beliefs of peers are believed to influence the behavior and beliefs of adolescents. The 2 = somewhat important response is included in the 0 = not very important category because it does not indicate a significant pro-academic belief on the part of the respondent's peers.

Control Variables. Family socioeconomic status is included as a control variable because of the relationships between student socioeconomic status and rates of sport participation and other related variables. Lower-income youths have less access to certain activities and therefore have lower rates of participation in those activities (Hawkins et al., 1992). Past studies have found a relationship between family socioeconomic variables and participation in school sports (Marsh, 1993; Picou & Curry, 1974). Several researchers have acknowledged this relationship and use socioeconomic status as a control variable in their studies that examine the effect of sport participation on educational and other outcomes (Hawkins et al., 1992; Marsh, 1993; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1990; Rehberg & Schafer, 1968; Spreitzer & Pugh, 1973).

Adolescents' socioeconomic status has also been found to be related to key mediating variables in this study, such as academic performance and personal resources (self-concept and locus of control). Finn and Rock (1997) found a relationship between family background characteristics (family structure, parents' education and income) and self-esteem and locus of control as well as academic performance (grades, test scores, and high school completion). Haller and Portes (1973) found that family socioeconomic status impacts the social capital received by adolescents in the form of parental aspirations. In the future outlook literature, adolescents' future outlook is strongly related to socioeconomic status (Lamm et al., 1976; Nurmi, 1987; Seginer, 1988; Seginer & Halabi, 1991). Therefore, in order to estimate the effect of athletic investment on life-chance perceptions of high school seniors, analyses will be performed with and without socioeconomic status as a control variable.

RESULTS

Multiple regression analyses are employed to estimate the net or direct effect of athletic participation on the life-chance perceptions of 12th grade male and female students as measured by students' reports of perceived chances of attaining future outcomes. This analytic technique allows for the assessment of the simultaneous and unique effects of athletic participation and other factors on life-chance perception outcomes. Effects will be examined with and without statistical controls, and analyses will be performed separately for males and females. The effects of participation in sports is believed to be different for males and females due to the difference in rates of participation for males and females and the importance each group gives to sports.

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among all analysis variables are presented by student gender (males above the diagonal, females below) in Table 10.1. The correlations reported in the upper diagonal reveal that among males there is a significant positive zero-order correlation between cumulative sports participation and the life-chance perception measure (r = .156). The male correlations in Table 10.1 also reveal that cumulative participation in sports is also positively related to measures of academic performance (grades, r = .241; standardized tests, r = .173), personal resources (locus of control, r = .122; self-concept, r = .126) and social capital (parental involvement, r = .107; pro-academic peers, r = .139).

As with males, the correlations reported in the lower diagonal reveal that among females there is a significant positive zero-order correlation between cumulative sport participation and the life-chance perception measure (r = .127). The female correlations in Table 10.1 also reveal that cumulative participation in sports is also positively related to measures of academic performance (grades, r = .231; standardized tests, r = .213), personal resources (locus of control, r = .143; self-concept, r = .093), and social capital (parental involvement, r = .128; pro-academic peers, r = .121). Examination of group means indicates that life-chance perceptions are somewhat higher among females (X = 9.24; SD = 2.80) than males (X = 9.10; SD = 3.03). However, males (X = 1.35; SD = 1.10) report substantially higher levels of cumulative athletic participation than females (X = .93; SD = 1.03).

Tables 10.2 and 10.3 present the results of our regression of the life-chance perceptions scale on sport participation with and without control variables for males and females, respectively. These tables report both standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients, and adjusted R^2 values. Standardized regression coefficients are discussed when we make comparisons of the relative effect of each predictor variable within gender groups. For comparisons of results between males and females unstandarized regression coefficients are discussed. The adjusted R^2 values represent the amount of total variance explained in the outcome measure (life-chance perceptions) by the set of predictor variables included in the model at each step of the analysis.

Examining the results among males in Table 10.2 without other statistical controls (in Step 1), the unadjusted standardized regression coefficient (which is the same as the zero-order correlation) shows that varsity sport participation is positively and significantly related to life-chance perceptions (b = .156; p < . 001). At Step 1, the adjusted R^2 is .024, indicating that among males, the athletic participation measure alone accounts for roughly 2.5% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

Table 10.1. Correlation Matrix of Analysis Variables by Student Gender

	Lifecha	*Sport*	*SES*	*Asian*	*Hisp*	*Black*	*White*	*NatAm*	*Grades*	*Test*	*Locus*	*Self*	*ParInv*	*Peers*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
Lifecha		.156**	.113**	.025	-.028*	-.050**	.043**	-.031*	.203**	.162**	.257**	.245**	.167**	.154**	9.10	3.03
Sport	.127**		.212**	-.004	-.046**	-.018	.052**	-.022	.241**	.173**	.122**	.126**	.107**	.139**	1.35	1.10
SES	.141**	.231**		.081**	-.205**	-.140**	.207**	-.059**	.298**	.418**	.123**	.085**	.170**	.107**	2.50	1.13
Asian	-.009	.003	.101**		-.108**	-.094**	-.405**	-.029*	.114**	.088**	-.011	-.008	.019	.077**	0.00	0.26
Hisp	-.062**	-.112**	-.221**	-.108**		-.133**	-.572**	-.041**	-.064**	-.160**	-.013	-.012	.013	-.004	0.13	0.34
Black	-.024	-.062**	-.133**	-.095**	-.141**		-.498**	-.036**	-.101**	-.204**	.004	.093**	.042**	.048**	0.10	0.30
White	.066**	.121**	.205**	-.386**	-.571**	-.503**		-.155**	.062**	.214**	.018	-.049**	-.042**	-.069**	0.68	0.47
NatAm	-.005	.003	-.034**	-.031**	-.046**	-.040**	-.163**		-.052**	-.068**	-.019	.012	-.020	-.014	0.00	0.10
Grades	.209**	.213**	.305**	.131**	-.093**	-.070**	.055**	-.046**		.504**	.234**	.186**	.127**	.183**	2.51	1.15
Test	.167**	.213**	.454**	.108**	-.194**	-.208**	.238**	-.068**	.522**		.228**	.150**	.069**	.060**	2.54	1.13
Locus	.270**	.143**	.190**	-.018	-.043**	-.023	.058**	-.008	.244**	.267**		.528**	.186**	.194**	2.52	1.10
Self	.231**	.093**	.052**	-.009	-.001	.146**	-.094**	.012	.153**	.098**	.507**		.211**	.189**	2.60	1.11
ParInv	.167**	.128**	.183**	.012	-.021	.037**	-.013	-.016	.193**	.112**	.262**	.254**		.285**	1.41	1.61
Peers	.169**	.121**	.099**	.079**	-.025*	.065**	-.066**	-.013	.170**	.046**	.216**	.196**	.304**		2.47	1.79
Mean	9.24	.93	2.43	.00	.14	.11	.67	.00	2.74	2.63	2.56	2.32	1.74	3.05		
S.D.	2.80	1.03	1.13	.25	.34	.31	.47	.11	1.12	1.10	1.12	1.13	1.72	1.72		

Females: Pairwise N = 5735 (lower diagonal)
Males: Pairwise N = 5245 (upper diagonal)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level
* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Table 10.2. Regression of Life Chance Perceptions on Sport Participation and Control Variables for Males (N = 5,245)

	Step 1	*Step 2*	*Step 3*	*Step 4*	*Step 5*
Varsity Sports	(.431) **.156*****	(.384) **.139*****	(.296) **.107*****	(.243) **.088*****	(.220) **.080*****
SES		(.195) **.073*****	(.004) **.018**	(.003) **.013**	(–.001) **–.004**
Asian		(.166) **.014**	(.000) **.000**	(.008) **.007**	(.001) **.001**
Hispanic		(–.102) **–.011**	(–.003) **–.004**	(–.126) **–.014**	(–.179) **–.020**
Black		(–.386) **–.039****	(–.207) **–.021**	(–.473) **–.048*****	(–.550) **–.055*****
Native American		(–.739) **–.025**	(–.507) **–.017**	(–.661) **–.023**	(–.647) **–.022**
Grades			(.365) **.138*****	(.261) **.099*****	(.228) **.086*****
Test Scores			(.161) **.060*****	(.006) **.024**	(.009) **.034***
Locus of Control				(.390) **.141*****	(.352) **.127*****
Self-Concept				(.384) **.141*****	(.338) **.124*****
Parental Involvement					(.154) **.082*****
Pro-academic Peers					(.009) **.057*****
Adj. R2	**.024**	**.032**	**.057**	**.112**	**.122**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.
Unstandardized beta coefficient in parentheses; Standardized beta coefficient in bold.

The second stage of our model adds statistical controls for two key background factors: ethnicity and family socioeconomic status. At Step 2, the magnitude of the net or unique athletic participation effect is somewhat reduced ($b = .139$; $p < .001$), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for ethnicity and family socioeconomic status are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, only family socioeconomic status ($b = .073$; $p < .001$) and African American ethnic status ($b = .039$; $p < .01$) show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions among males. It is important to note, however, that at this stage the effect of athletic participation ($b = .139$) is nearly double that of family socioeconomic status (b = .073) and more than three times that of African American ethnic status (b = .039). At Step 2, the adjusted R^2 is .032, indicating that among males, the athletic participation measure in combination with family socioeconomic status and ethnicity, account for slightly more than 3% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

The third stage of our model adds statistical controls for two indicators of *academic performance*—grades and standardized tests—which may be key mediators in the proposed model. At Step 3, the net or unique athletic participation effect is again reduced (b = .107; $p < .001$), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for background (ethnicity and family socioeconomic status) and academic performance (grades and standardized tests) are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, only grades (b = .138; $p < .001$) and standardized tests (b = .060; $p < .01$) show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions among males. At this stage the effect of athletic participation (b = .107) is slightly more than three-quarters that of grades (b = .138) but almost double that of standardized tests (b = .060). At Step 3, the adjusted R^2 is .057, indicating that among males, the athletic participation measure in combination with background factors (family socioeconomic status and ethnicity) and academic performance measures (grades and standardized tests) accounts for slightly more than 5.5% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

The fourth stage of our model adds statistical controls for two indicators of *personal resources*—self-concept and locus of control—which may be key mediators in the proposed model. At Step 4, the net or unique athletic participation effect is sizably reduced (b = .088; $p < .001$), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for background (ethnicity and family socioeconomic status), academic performance (grades and standardized tests), and personal resources (locus of control and self-concept) are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, only African American ethnic status (b = –.048; $p < .001$), grades (b = .099; $p < .001$), locus of control (b = .141; $p < .01$), and self-concept (b = .141; $p < .001$), show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions among males. At this stage the effect of athletic participation (b = .088) is about 10% less than that of grades (b = .099), and roughly two-thirds (62%) that of self concept (b = .141) and locus of control (b = .141), but almost double that of African American ethnic status (b = –.048). At Step 4, the adjusted R^2 has nearly doubled to .112, indicating that among males, the athletic participation measure in combination with background factors (family socioeconomic status and ethnicity), academic performance measures (grades and standardized tests), and personal resources accounts for slightly more than 11% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

The fifth and final stage of our model adds statistical controls for two indicators of social capital—parental involvement and pro academic peers—which may be key indicators in the proposed model. At Step 5, the net or unique athletic participation effect is slightly reduced ($b = .080$; $p < .001$), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for background (ethnicity and family socioeconomic status), academic performance (grades and standardized tests), personal resources (locus of control and self-concept), and social capital (parental involvement and pro-academic peers) are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, African American ethnic status ($b = -.055$; $p < .001$), grades ($b = .086$; $p < .001$), standardized tests ($b = .034$; $p < .05$), locus of control ($b = .127$; $p < .001$), self-concept ($b = .124$; $p < .001$), parental involvement ($b = .082$; $p < .001$), and pro-academic peers ($b = .057$; $p < .001$) show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions among males. At this stage the effect of athletic participation ($b =.080$) is about two-thirds that of locus of control ($b = .127$) and self-concept ($b = .124$), quite similar to that of grades ($b = .086$) and parental involvement ($b = .082$), more than double that of standardized tests ($b= .034$), but almost a third greater than that of pro-academic peers ($b= .057$) and African American ethnic status ($b= -.055$). At Step 5, the adjusted R^2 increased slightly to .122, indicating that among males, the athletic participation measure in combination with background factors (family socioeconomic status and ethnicity), academic performance measures (grades and standardized tests), personal resources (locus of control and self-concept), and social capital (parental involvement and pro-academic peers) accounts for slightly more than 12% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

In the full model and almost throughout the stages, African American ethnic status has been the only *background factor* in our model to significantly impact the life-chance perceptions of male high school seniors. Specifically, African American males, compared to other ethnic male peers, are significantly less likely than White male seniors to hold positive or high perceptions of their future life chances. It is interesting to note that among male seniors, African American ethnic status remained significant after introducing statistical controls for other key mediating factors—personal resources, academic performance, and social capital—while the effects of family socioeconomic status did not remain so. Among the *academic performance* measures the effects of grades were larger and appeared more stable than those of standardized tests as correlates of life-chance perceptions. As expected, male seniors with higher grades and standardized tests showed higher or more positive perceptions of their future life chances. With regard to our *personal resource* measures, there was remarkable similarity in both the stability and magnitude to the effects of locus of control and self-concept on life-chance perceptions. They exhibited the largest unique or direct effects of any variable in the model and their combined contribution to the total variance explained exceeded that of other factors examined. Clearly these personal resource measures are important correlates of life-chance perceptions and their potential mediating influence needs to be understood better. Finally, again as expected, both measures of *social capital*—parental involvement and pro-academic peers—were found to have significant direct effects on the life-chance perceptions of male high school seniors.

In the full model (Step 5), we see that the magnitude of the athletic participation effect (b= .080) has been reduced to one-half its original size (b = .156), but remains statistically significant even after introducing statistical controls for background, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital. In essence, our results indicate that roughly one-half (49%) of the relationship between athletic participation and life-chance perceptions among male high school seniors is direct and unmediated while roughly one-half (51%) of the athletic participation effect operates through, or is mediated by, the set of other factors—background, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital—examined in our model. Examining both the magnitude of the standardized regression coefficients in the full model and the relative contribution to the total explained variance, it would appear that personal resources (locus of control and self-concept) are key mediators of life-chance perceptions among male high school seniors.

Examining the results among females in Table 10.3 without other statistical controls (in Step 1), the unadjusted standardized regression coefficient shows that varsity sport participation is positively and significantly related to life-chance perceptions (b = .127; $p < .001$). At Step 1, the adjusted R^2 is .016, indicating that among females, the athletic participation measure alone accounts for slightly more than 1.5% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

The second stage of our model adds statistical controls for two key background factors: ethnicity and family socioeconomic status. Here, the magnitude of the net or unique athletic participation effect is reduced (b = .097; $p < .001$), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for ethnicity and family socioeconomic status are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, only family socioeconomic status (b = .113; $p < .001$) shows a significant relationship with life-chance perceptions among females. At Step 2, the adjusted R^2 is .029, indicating that among females, the athletic participation measure in combination with family socioeconomic status and ethnicity account for almost 3% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

The third stage of our model adds statistical controls for two indicators of *academic performance*—grades and standardized tests—which may be key

Table 10.3. Regression of Life-Chance Perceptions on Sports Participation and Control Variables for Females (N = 5,735)

	Step 1	*Step 2*	*Step 3*	*Step 4*	*Step 5*
Varsity Sports	(.345)	(.263)	(.186)	(.134)	(.111)
	.127***	**.097*****	**.069*****	**.050*****	**.041****
SES		(.279)	(.138)	(.108)	(.008)
		.113***	**.056*****	**.043****	**–.032***
Asian		(–.278)	(–.474)	(–.368)	(–.437)
		–.025	**–.043****	**–.033***	**–.039****
Hispanic		(–.246)	(–.183)	(–.276)	(–.293)
		–.030	**–.023**	**–.034***	**–.036****
Black		(–.008)	(.001)	(–.249)	(–.309)
		–.010	**.001**	**–.028***	**–.035***
Native American		(–.101)	(.116)	(–.003)	(–.001)
		–.004	**.005**	**–.001**	**–.000**
Grades			(.393)	(.304)	(.262)
			.158***	**.122*****	**.105*****
Test Scores			(.117)	(.002)	(.005)
			.046**	**.011**	**.023**
Locus of Control				(.381)	(.336)
				.153***	**.135*****
Self-Concept				(.325)	(.289)
				.131***	**.116*****
Parental Involvement					(.007)
					.045**
Pro-academic Peers					(.131)
					.081***
Adj. R2	**.016**	**.029**	**.058**	**.112**	**.121**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.
Unstandardized beta coefficient in parentheses; Standardized beta coefficient in bold.

mediators in the proposed model. At Step 3, the net or unique athletic participation effect is sizably reduced ($b = .069$; $p < .001$), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for background (ethnicity and family socioeconomic status) and academic performance (grades and standardized tests) are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, family socioeconomic status ($b = .056$; $p < .001$), Asian ethnic status ($b = -.043$; $p < .01$), grades ($b = .158$; $p < .001$) and standardized tests ($b = .046$; $p < .01$) show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions among females. Here, the effect of athletic participation ($b = .069$) is about 10% more than that of family socioeconomic status ($b = .056$) and

20% more than Asian ethnic status (b = –.043) and standardized tests (b =.046), but only about half that of grades (b = .158). At Step 3, the adjusted R2 is .058, indicating that among females, the athletic participation measure in combination with background factors (family socioeconomic status and ethnicity) and academic performance measures (grades and standardized tests) accounts for roughly 6% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

The fourth stage of our model adds statistical controls for two indicators of *personal resources*—locus of control and self-concept—which may be key indicators in the proposed model. At Step 4, the net or unique athletic participation effect is reduced (b = .050; p < .001), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for background (ethnicity and family socioeconomic status), academic performance (grades and standardized tests), and personal resources (locus of control and self-concept) are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, family socioeconomic status (b = .043; p < .01), Asian ethnic status (b = –.033; p < .05), Hispanic ethnic status (b = –.034; p < .05), African American ethnic status (b = –.028; p < .05), grades (b = .122; p < .001), locus of control (b = .153; p < .001), and self-concept (b = .131; p < .001), show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions among females. Here, the effect of athletic participation (b = .050) is larger than that of all the background factors: family socioeconomic status (b = .043), Asian ethnic status (b = –.033), Hispanic ethnic status (b = –.034), and African American ethnic status (b = –.028). The effect of athletic participation at this stage is about 40% that of grades (b = .122) and self-concept (b = .131), and one-third that of locus of control (b = .153). At Step 4, the adjusted R^2 has nearly doubled to .112, indicating that among females, the athletic participation measure in combination with background factors (family socioeconomic status and ethnicity), academic performance measures (grades and standardized tests) and personal resources accounts for slightly more than 11% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

The fifth and final stage of our model adds statistical controls for two indicators of *social capital*—parental involvement and pro-academic peers—which may be key indicators in the proposed model. At Step 5, the net or unique athletic participation effect is further reduced (b = .041; p < .01), but remains statistically significant when statistical controls for background (ethnicity and family socioeconomic status), academic performance (grades and standardized tests), personal resources (locus of control and self-concept), and social capital (parental involvement and pro-academic peers) are introduced. Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, family socioeconomic status (b = –.032; p < .05), Asian ethnic status (b = –.039; p < .01), Hispanic ethnic status (b = –.036; p < .01), African American ethnic status (b = –.035; p < .05), grades (b = .105; p <

.001), locus of control ($b = .135$; $p < .001$), self-concept ($b = .116$; $p < .001$), parental involvement ($b = .045$; $p < .01$), and pro-academic peers ($b = .081$; $p < .001$) all show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions among females. Here, the effect of athletic participation ($b = .041$) is somewhat greater than that of socioeconomic status ($b = .032$), Asian ethnic status ($b = -.039$), Hispanic ethnic status ($b = -.036$), and African American ethnic status ($b = -.035$), quite similar to parental involvement ($b = .045$); half that of pro-academic peers ($b = .081$), about 40% that of grades ($b = .105$), roughly one-third that of self-concept ($b = .116$) and locus of control ($b = .135$). At Step 5, the adjusted R^2 increased slightly to .121, indicating that among females, the athletic participation measure in combination with background factors (family socioeconomic status and ethnicity), academic performance measures (grades and standardized tests), personal resources (locus of control and self-concept), and social capital (parental involvement and pro-academic peers) accounts for slightly more than 12% of the total variation in life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

In the full model and throughout the stages, *background factors*—family socioeconomic status and ethnicity—have significantly impacted the life-chance perceptions of female high school seniors. Family socioeconomic status is shown to have a significant impact on the life-chance perceptions of female high school seniors even after introducing statistical controls for other key mediating factors included in our model; it is important to note that we did not find this effect of family socioeconomic status among males. Specifically, females from higher family socioeconomic backgrounds compared to females from lower family socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely than White female seniors to hold positive or high perceptions of their future life chances. Minority ethnic status is also shown to have a significant impact on the life-chance perceptions of female high school seniors. At Step 3 when controls for *background factors* and *academic performance* are introduced, Asian ethnic status is shown to have a significant impact on life-chance perceptions. At Step 4 when controls for *personal resources* are introduced and at Step 5 when controls for *social capital* are introduced, Asian, Hispanic, and African American ethnic status significantly impact the life-chance perceptions of female high school seniors. Specifically, Asian, Hispanic, and African American females, compared to Native American females, are significantly less likely than White female seniors to hold positive or high perceptions of their future life chances.

Among the *academic performance* measures the effects of grades were significantly larger and appeared more stable than those of standardized tests as correlates of life-chance perceptions. As expected, female seniors with higher grades and standardized tests showed higher or positive perceptions of their future life chances. With regard to the *personal resource* measures, there was notable similarity in both the stability and magnitude of the effects of locus of control and self-concept on life-chance perceptions. The personal resource measures exhibited the largest unique and direct effects of any variable in the model and their combined contribution to the variance explained exceeded that of other factors examined. Finally, both measures of social capital—parental involvement and pro-academic peers—were found to have significant direct effects on the life-chance perceptions of female high school seniors.

In the full model (Step 5), we see that the magnitude of the athletic participation effect (b = .041) has been reduced to one-third its original size (b = .127), but remains statistically significant even after introducing statistical controls for background, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital. In essence, our results indicate that roughly one-third (32%) of the relationship between athletic participation and life-chance perceptions among female high school seniors is direct and unmediated while roughly two-thirds (68%) of the athletic participation effect operates through, or is mediated by, the set of other factors —background, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital—examined in our model. Examining both the magnitude of the standardized regression coefficients in the full model and the relative contribution to the total explained variance it would appear that personal resources (locus of control and self-concept) are key mediators of life-chance perceptions among female high school seniors.

Comparative Regression Analysis of Life-Chance Perceptions

Referring again to Tables 10.2 and 10.3, which present the results of our regression of the life-chance perceptions scale on sport participation with and without control variables, we compare males and females results using unstandardized regression coefficients. Examining the results in Step 1 without other statistical controls, the unstandardized regression coefficient shows that varsity sport participation is positively and significantly related to life-chance perceptions for males (b = .431; p < .001) and females (b = .345; p < .001). Comparing the coefficients, we find that the magnitude of the effect of varsity sports participation on life-chance perceptions is substantially larger for males (b = .431) than females (b = .345).

At the second stage (Step 2) of our model where *background factors* are introduced, the magnitude of the net or unique athletic participation effect is reduced, but remains statistically significant for both males and females. Again we find that the unstandardized coefficient of males (b = .384; p < .001) is larger than that of females (b = .263; p < .001). Among the set of statistical controls entered at this step, family socioeconomic status shows a significant relationship with life-chance perceptions among males (b = .195; p < .001) and females (b = .279; p < .001); and African American ethnic status shows a significant relationship with life-chance perceptions for males only (b = –.386; p < .01). The effect of family socioeconomic status among males (b = .195) is roughly 70% that of the effect among females (b = .279).

The third stage of our model adds statistical controls for indicators of *academic performance*: grades and standardized tests. At Step 3, the net or unique athletic participation effect is substantially reduced, but remains statistically significant for both males (b = .296; p < .001) and females (b = .186; p < .001). Among the set of statistical controls included at this step, *background factors* show a significant relationship with life-chance perceptions among females only, family socioeconomic status (B= .138; p< .001), and Asian ethnic status (b = –.474; p < .01). The indicators of *academic performance* - grades and standardized tests - show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions for both males and females. Among males, the unstandardized coefficients for grades (b = .365; p < .001) and standardized tests (b = .161; p < .001) are similar to those among females for grades (b = .393; p < .001) and standardized tests (b = .117; p < .01).

At the fourth stage of our model, statistical controls for indicators of *personal resources*—locus of control and self-concept—are added. At Step 4, the net or unique athletic participation effect is reduced but remains statistically significant for both males and females. The unstandardized coefficient for males (b = .243; p < .001) is nearly double that of females (b = .134; p < .001). Among the set of statistical controls included at this step, the *background factors* that show a significant relationship with life-chance perceptions among females include family socioeconomic status (b = .108; p < .01), Asian ethnic status (b = –.368; p < .05), Hispanic ethnic status (b = –.276; p < .05), and African American ethnic status (b = –.249; p < .05). Among males, only African American ethnic status is shown to be significantly related to life-chance perceptions (b = –.473; p < .001). Among the indicators of *academic performance,* only grades show significant relationships with life-chance perceptions for both males and females. The unstandardized coefficient among males for grades is (b = .261; p < .001) and among females is (b = .304; p < .001). The indicators of *personal resources*—self-concept and locus of control—are shown to be significantly related to life-chance perceptions among males and females. The effect of the personal resource indicators is very similar for males and females. The unstandardized coefficients for locus of control among males is (b = .390; p < .001) and among females is (b = .381; p < .001). The unstandardized coefficients for self-concept among males is (b = .384; p < .001) and among females is (b = .325; p < .001).

In the fifth and final stage of our model, statistical controls for *social capital*—parental involvement and pro-academic peers—are added. At Step 5, The sports participation effect is again reduced but remains statistically significant among males ($b = .220$; $p < .001$) and females ($b = .111$; $p < .01$) when controls for *background* (ethnicity and family socioeconomic status), *academic performance* (grades and standardized tests), *personal resources* (locus of control and self-concept), and *social capital* (parental involvement and pro-academic peers) are introduced. Among the *background* factors entered at this step, among males only African American ethnic status ($b = -.550$; $p < .001$) is significantly related to life-chance perceptions. Among females, family socioeconomic status ($b = .008$; $p < .05$), Asian ethnic status ($b = -.437$; $p < .01$), Hispanic ethnic status ($b = -.293$; $p < .01$), and African American ethnic status ($b = -.309$; $p < .05$) are shown to be significantly related to life-chance perceptions. It is interesting to note that the effect of African American ethnic status among females ($b = -.309$) is only 56% that of the effect among males ($b = -.550$).

Among the indicators of *academic performance,* grades are shown to be significantly related to life-chance perceptions among males ($b = .228$; $p < .001$) and females ($b = .262$; $p < .001$). The magnitude of the effect of grades is similar for both gender groups. Among males only, standardized tests ($b = .009$; $p < .05$) are shown to be significantly related to life-chance perceptions. Among the indicators of *personal resources,* both locus of control and self-concept are shown to be significantly related to life-chance perceptions among males and females. The unstandardized coefficients for locus of control are similar among males ($b = .352$; $p < .001$) and females ($b = .336$; $p < .001$). The effect of self-concept is significantly larger among males ($b = .338$; $p < .001$) than it is among females ($b = .289$; $p < .001$). Among the indicators of *social capital,* both parental involvement and pro-academic peers show a significant relationship with life-chance perceptions among males and females. The magnitude of the effect of parental involvement among males ($b = .154$; $p < .001$) is over 20 times the effect among females ($b = .007$; $p < .01$). Interestingly, the effect of pro-academic peers seems to indicate the opposite; among females, the coefficient for pro-academic peers is ($b = .131$; $p < .001$) and among males it is ($b = .009$; $p < .001$).

In an overall comparison between males and females, some notable differences and similarities are observed in the effect that certain variables have on life-chance perceptions of high school seniors. With regard to the effect of participation in varsity sports on perceptions of future life-chances, we found as expected that the effect is stronger in magnitude among males than among females. Although the effect of sport participation is significantly related to life-chance perceptions among females and the effect remains stable even after introducing control variables included in our model, the size of the effect ($b = .111$) is only half that of males ($b = .220$). Another important difference in the effect of sport participation on life-chance perceptions is that among males, roughly one-half (51%) of the effect of sports participation operates through the set of other factors—background factors, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital—examined in our model while among females, two-thirds of the effect operates through or is mediated by the set of other factors.

One of the main differences between the gender groups is the effect of *background factors* on life-chance perceptions. Among males, African American ethnic status seems to be the only variable that is significantly related to high school seniors' perceptions of future life-chances. On the other hand, among females, family socioeconomic status and ethnicity are significantly related to life-chance perceptions even after introducing controls for academic performance, personal resources, and social capital. These findings, which indicate that African American males and Asian, Hispanic, and African American females from lower family socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to have a negative view of their future life-chances, warrants further examination to better understand the interaction between students' background factors and their life-chance perceptions.

With regard to the measures of *academic performance*, the effect that grades and standardized tests have on life-chance perceptions is similar among males and females. The effect of grades is shown to be larger and more stable than the effect of standardized tests for both gender groups. The effect of *personal resources*—locus of control and self-concept—is shown to be very important correlates of life-chance perceptions for males and females. For both gender groups, locus of control and self-concept exhibited the largest direct effects of any variable in the model and their combined contribution to the total variance explained exceeded that of all other factors examined.

The effect of the *social capital* measures operated differently among males and females. Both parental involvement and pro-academic peers are significantly related to life-chance perceptions among males and females. The magnitude of the relationship between parental involvement and life-chance perceptions is over twenty times larger among males (b = .154) than females (b = .007). The magnitude of the relationship between pro-academic peers and life-chance perceptions works in the opposite way with the effect among males (b = .009) being 20 times smaller than the effect of pro-academic peers among females (b = .131).

These findings provide important evidence regarding our research question: Does participation in school-based sports affect the life-chance perceptions of high school seniors and does the effect of participation in school-based sports differ among males and females? The findings have shown that participation in sports does have an effect on life-chance perceptions of high school male and female seniors and that effect does differ among the gender groups. The results of the analysis also provide findings regarding the relationship between participation in school-based sports and the mediating variables examined in our study—*academic performance, personal resources,* and *social capital.*

DISCUSSION

Belief in the "American dream" encompasses principles that are deeply intrinsic in the American psyche. One of the most important of these beliefs is that "all men are created equal" and all Americans have an equal opportunity to pursue the American dream (Hochschild, 1995). Yet we know that there is significant inequality between the status of Whites and minority groups. This study has explored how adolescents from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds see their chances for attaining the American dream. A positive perception of future life chances has been demonstrated in prior research to positively influence the effort and commitment put forth by individuals in the pursuit of their long-term goals. The specific aim of this study was to examine the potential role that cumulative participation in school-based sports (which has been found to be positively associated with various academic, personal, and social outcomes) could play in shaping young adults' perception of their future life chances. Recognizing the probable variation in the benefits that males and females from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds derive from participation in sports, this study has examined the effect of participation in school-based sports among males and females separately. The main research questions raised by this study, does participation in school-based sports affect the life-chance perceptions of high school seniors and does the effect of participation in school-based sports differ among males and females were addressed using OLS regression analysis of data from a national longitudinal survey of high school seniors.

The results of the analysis show that among both males and females there is a significant and positive relationship between cumulative participation in school-based sports and life-chance perceptions. This relationship remained significant even after adding appropriate measures of background factors, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital. The findings suggests that sports participation is a strong and resilient predictor of high perceptions of future life-chances among high school seniors.

The results of this study reveal some important differences in the effect of participating in school-based sports among male and female high school seniors. Among males, about half of the effect of participation in sports on life-chance perceptions is direct and unmediated. Among females, only one-third of the effect is direct while two-thirds of the effect of participation in sports operates through the set of other factors examined in the model (measures of background factors, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital).

That participation in school-based sports remained positively and significantly related to life-chance perceptions among females even after controlling for background factors, academic performance, personal resources, and social capital, warrants further exploration of its role in the development of positive perceptions of future life chances among females. Twenty-five years after the passage of Title IX, females still report less participation in sports. Although females report lower levels of cumulative participation in sports than males (X = .93 compared to X = 1.35), the findings in this study suggest that participation in sports plays a significant role in life-chance perceptions among females. Findings from this study suggest that high school females that do participate in sports gain benefits from their participation. The magnitude of those benefits in the form of positive perceptions of future life chances is not equal to those experienced by males but they are significant and positive.

Among the factors that have been shown to be significantly related to life-chance perceptions, background factors (family socioeconomic status and ethnicity) significantly impact females' life-chance perceptions. This finding suggests that females from lower family socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to hold less positive perceptions of their future life chances compared to their female peers from higher family socioeconomic backgrounds. This finding is consistent with the future outlook literature, which suggests that youths from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to have a negative view of their future (Lamm et al., 1976; Seginer, 1988; Seginer & Halabi, 1991). In this sample of high school seniors, females have a higher mean score on the life-chance perceptions scale than males, which is contrary to the literature that suggests that females tend to have a less positive or optimistic view of their future compared to their male counterparts (Seginer, 1988; Seginer & Halabi, 1991).

In addition to family socioeconomic background, ethnic/racial group status also has a significant impact on life-chance perceptions among females. The results of the OLS regression analysis reveal that Asian, African American, and Hispanic females are less likely than White female high school seniors to hold positive perceptions of their future life chances. Examining this finding while taking into account that females report higher or more positive life-chance perceptions than males suggests that among female high school seniors, ethnic/racial group status is more likely than gender to influence life-chance perceptions. We find in the case of females that ethnic/racial minority status negatively influences perceptions of future life chances. In light of this discovery, it is clear that female high school seniors that are part of ethnic/racial minority groups are vulnerable to the development of negative or less favorable perceptions of their future life chances. The importance of a positive view of the future for adolescents and young adults has been established in the literature. A negative view of future life chances has some troubling implications for the attainment of future goals for female ethnic/racial minorities. Since perceptions of future life chances is believed to directly influence present behavior, commitment, and effort directed toward the attainment of future goals, it seems evident that a negative future outlook can hinder the attainment of the American dream. In light of this, it is crucial to determine ways to enhance participation among female high school students from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds in activities that increase positive perceptions of future life chances. School-based sports are but one of the activities that can have a positive influence on life-chance perceptions and the variables that contribute to the development of a positive perception of life chances.

In regard to males, the background factor that is shown to significantly influence life-chance perceptions is African American ethnic status. Among males, family socioeconomic status was not found to significantly impact life-chance perceptions. Findings from the OLS regression analysis reveals that African American males, in contrast to other ethnic/racial minorities, are less likely than White males to have positive perceptions of their future life chances.

It is not surprising that students with higher grades and test scores also had higher or more positive perceptions of future life chances than those with lower grades and test scores. A high percentage of minority students fit the "at-risk" profile of demographic and environmental factors most likely to predispose students to academic failure. Although the history of minority student academic performance has been characterized by a record of underachievement, many researchers (Alva & Padilla, 1995; Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Braddock et al., 1991; Marsh, 1993; Rutter, 1987) suggest that studies of these students should focus on the processes that provide students with the protective mechanisms to achieve in the face of adversity. Participation in sports has proven to increase protective mechanisms (Braddock, 1981; Hawkins et al., 1992) and effective strategies (Curry, 1997) for performing in stressful situations and achieving in the face of adversity. Academic performance is a key way young people measure their competence. It has implications for life-chance perceptions and the other variables that contribute to a positive view of future life chances.

An adolescent's concept of self is to a large degree influenced by perceived competence in important tasks, the most important in this stage of life being school. Participation in sports has been shown in many studies to positively influence academic self-esteem (Braddock, 1981; Marsh, 1993) and overall self-esteem (Marsh, 1993). Academic performance can also influence the locus of control or attribution of success of young people

(Marsh, 1993). A student that achieves well in school will likely attribute his/her performance to their own efforts.

Self-concept and locus of control were found to be key mediators of perceptions of future life chances among males and females. These measures of personal resources exhibited the largest unique and direct effect of any variables examined in our study and their combined contribution to the variance explained exceeded that of all other variables. The effect of self-concept and locus of control functioned in a basically identical manner for males and females. Thus personal recourses are found to be key mediators of life-chance perceptions among high school seniors.

In this study we found that measures of social capital, parental educational involvement and pro-academic peer beliefs had a significant impact on the life-chance perceptions of both males and females. Comparing the regression coefficients, we observe an interesting finding. The relationship of parental involvement and life-chance perceptions is over 20 times larger for males (b = .154) than females (b = .007). We find the opposite relationship for influence of pro-academic peers on life chance perceptions. Among males the magnitude of the relationship is twenty times smaller (b = .009) than it is among females (b = .131). These findings suggest that parental educational involvement is much more salient for the development of positive perceptions of future life chances for males as compared to females. The findings also suggest that peers play a more important role in females' development of a positive perception of future life chances. These findings highlight possible differences among males and females in the factors that influence positive perceptions of future life chances, which need further exploration.

A major purpose of this study was providing a broad theoretical framework for examining how a future outlook is shaped and realized. This study has explored how young adults from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds see their chances for attaining the American dream and the role of activities, such as school-based sports in the development of positive life-chance perceptions. How these perceived chances influence the attainment process was beyond the scope of this study but is an important area to be explored in future studies.

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CHAPTER 11

"LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND"

Examining Issues of School Reform and Social Justice

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> *We still live in a society that is separate and unequal. To achieve social and economic justice, the goal for the 21st century must be the elimination of institutionalized racism in all sectors of social, economic, cultural, and political life—in business, housing, employment, law enforcement, the courts, health-care institutions, and, of course, schools*
>
> —Berlak (2002, p. 14)

INTRODUCTION

For more than a decade, accountability-based reform has been America's frontline defense against the public's perception of schools as failures in the academic preparation of today's youth and as unwitting agents in the

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Surmounting All Odds, pages 251–270
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stratification of society along racial and economic lines. Educational accountability has become the "language of currency in educational policy" (McNeil, 2000, p. 1). In an effort to speak this "language of currency" at the local level, 49 states embraced standards and assessments linked to significant consequences for schools and their principals (McNeil, 2000; Ravitch, 2000). To hold schools more accountable for their academic performance at a national level, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). NCLB places federal pressure on schools to improve with a sharp focus on outcomes for subgroups of children by race, disability status, limited English proficient status, and socioeconomic status. The assumption and the hope of the Act is that accountability-based reform will improve student achievement and reduce the gap in achievement along racial and social lines (Ravitch, 2000). Reform will be exemplified by the articulation of high standards for student achievement and the administration of tests to determine the level of student proficiency in the standards.

A review of research on the effectiveness of state accountability systems brings mixed results. The benefits of accountability-based reform in increasing equity are being weighed because evaluations of states, years into the implementation of accountability systems, reveal contradictory effects on equity (Clinchy, 2001). Test results appear to improve for all subgroups of students, but according to some reports there appears to be an increase in the number of low-income and minority students retained in grades, placed in special classes, denied graduation, and dropping out of school (Haney, 2000). Regardless of the effects, the construction of accountability systems has successfully brought to prominence the issue of racial and social inequity in public schools (Scheurich, Skrla, & Johnson, 2000).

"The current educational reform [is portrayed] as if it were exclusively about...accountability, certification and testing" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 189) when it is about so much more. It is also about the racial and social inequalities in education that continue to plague the United States despite the efforts of mainstream policies and programs. The persistence of these inequities is particularly disquieting because of the demographic shifts occurring in this nation. "The United States is becoming more diverse (and) the rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer" (Ward, 1993, p. 8). If the pattern of inequality continues, more minority children and more poor children will leave schools without adequate preparation for the global economy (Ward, 1993).

This reauthorization of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 includes Parts A through I. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Part A, Subpart 1 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which focuses on how schools are to improve and establishes a timeframe for improvement. A critique of the issues of accountability, highlighted in an overview, is followed by a discussion of the effectiveness of accountability-based and the implications for social justice for poor children and children of color.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACT

The concept of equality of educational opportunity has been the cornerstone of public education throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The concept has been reshaped by the shift in responsibility of school reform from merely providing a free education for every child, to ensuring the goal of quality outcomes for every child. "Today, equality of educational opportunity is conceived as the extent to which schools are able to provide equality of educational results" regardless of a student's socioeconomic background or ethnicity (Riordan, 1997, p. 6).

As we move further into the 21st century, with relatively little success in achieving this goal, the federal government has stepped in to increase educational services to underserved children. The No Child Left Behind legislation, which is the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was signed into law on January 8, 2002, by President George W. Bush. This unprecedented legislation provides specific guidelines for states and local school systems in their efforts to improve academic achievement for underprivileged children.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, since its inception in 1965, has been the key federal tool in providing funding and regulations for K–12 education. The recent reauthorization of ESEA, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, has as its key focus the closing of the achievement gap between underserved and minority students, and their White peers. The stated purpose of the Act "is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments" (NCLB, 2001). This new Act, while building upon prior legislation and maintains the basic framework of that legislation, makes some changes that are highlighted in this overview. (The overview is strictly based on the language of the legislation.) The overview discusses the framework on which this Act stands: standards, assessments, and accountability.

Standards

Any state that receives funds under the auspices of improving basic programs must submit a plan that demonstrates that the State has adopted challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards to be used by the state in determining if the students have mastered minimum competency. The academic standards shall be the same academic standards that the state applies to all schools and children in the state. The plan should include at a minimum mathematics, reading or language arts, and science. However, this is not an all-inclusive list, because states have the flexibility to determine other subjects to be included in the plan.

Under this Act, state standards for achievement must be aligned with the state's content standards and describe two levels of achievement: proficient and advanced. These levels of achievement will describe how well children are mastering the materials in state academic standards. A third level of achievement must also be created that would provide information on the status of lower-achieving children toward mastering the proficient and advance levels of achievement.

Assessment

Each state, in consultation with local educational agencies, must demonstrate they have implemented a set of high-quality, yearly student academic assessments that include, at a minimum, academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science. These assessments must be administered to all students in all public schools in the state. These assessments should be aligned with the state's challenging academic content and student academic achievement standards, and provide coherent information about student attainment of such standards. The assessments in reading or language arts and math are to be administered in grades 3 through 8, beginning with the 2005–2006 school year. These assessments are the primary means of determining the yearly performance of the state and of each local educational agency in enabling all children to meet the state's challenging student academic achievement standards. However, no state shall be required to meet the requirement relating to science assessment until the beginning of the 2007–2008 school year.

To guarantee that every student's performance is measured against state standards, states must report scores in terms of proficiency levels rather than as percentile scores. The Act also requires that at least 95% of the children enrolled in the state's public schools participate in the assessments, and 95% of the children in each of the following subgroups: race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, economically disadvantaged status, and limited English proficiency. These assessments must involve multiple up-to-date measures of student academic achievement, including measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding.

Additionally, every state must participate in the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP) in reading and mathematics, administered in the fourth and eighth grades. This is so a national comparison of the rigor of state assessments can be obtained, with the federal government paying the cost of participation. Unlike state assessments, NAEP is administered to a random sample of students in the state.

Accountability

At the core of new federal reform is accountability. Plans submitted by states under Title I shall demonstrate that the state has developed and is implementing a single, statewide State accountability system that will be effective in ensuring that all local educational agencies, public elementary schools, and public secondary schools make adequate yearly progress. While there is some discretion in calculating the adequate yearly progress for states, they must adhere to the strict guidelines and criteria in Title I. A state's adequate yearly progress baseline will be the higher of either the percentage of students at the proficient level (or higher) in the school that is at the 20th percentile in the state, or the percentage of students in the state's lowest-achieving subgroup who score at the proficient level or higher. States will establish a timeline for adequate yearly progress and ensure that all students in each subgroup meet or exceed the state's proficient level of academic achievement.

In order to focus attention and close achievement gaps, not only will student performance as a whole be measured and reported, but it must also be disaggregated by the six student subgroups. States must also provide statewide annual measurable objectives for quantifying adequate yearly progress. These include providing separate baselines for mathematics and reading/language arts and establishing a single minimum percentage of students needing to meet the proficiency standard.

If any of the disaggregated groups do not meet the measurable objectives, then the state, district, or school will be considered failing to make adequate yearly progress. Any state that fails adequate yearly progress in two or more consecutive years in a Title I school will undergo a prescriptive series of sanctions. The sanctions increase in severity depending upon how long a school fails to make adequate yearly progress. They include school improvement plans that provide technical assistance, the use of scientifically based professional development practices, supplemental educational services made available to students, public school choice, reconstitution of the school, revamping the curriculum, conversion to a public charter school, or possible state takeover of the school.

States must publish annual report cards beginning with the 2002–2003 school years. Although states may continue to use their existing report cards, they must now include the following data:

1. aggregate student achievement information on each state assessment, for each level of proficiency;
2. disaggregate achievement data of each assessment by the six required subgroups;
3. comparisons of subgroup achievement and measurable objectives for that subgroup for each required assessment;
4. percentage of students not tested, aggregate and disaggregate;
5. the latest two-year trend date on each required assessment;
6. aggregate information on other public school indicators; and
7. the professional qualifications of teachers in the state's public schools, including the percentage teaching with emergency or provisional credentials, and the percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers, reported both in aggregate and for the lowest and highest school poverty quartiles.

Correspondingly, local educational agencies must publish annual district report cards within the same period, including all of the data listed above for the district as a whole and for each public school. Additionally, local education agencies must include in their report cards the number and percentage of schools in a district that have been identified for improvement, the name of identified schools, and the duration of identification status for each, as well as comparative data for state assessments for each school and for the district as a whole, compared to the state.

CRITIQUE OF THE ACT

As the implementation of NCLB proceeds, issues come to the surface that give education stakeholders reason to critically consider the direction schools should take in their efforts to comply with the mandates of the Act. This "[A]ct features a convoluted scheme of federal-state power sharing on a much broader system of assessment and accountability than ever" (Reville, 2002, paragraph 2) in recent history. The issues within this scheme include high stakes testing, stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, an emphasis on teacher quality, and an emphasis on proven methods of teaching. These issues are not new to educational reform but the fact that this legislation reshapes the federal government's role in public education, by linking the receipt of federal funds to the improvement of student achievement, changes the context of the issues.

"NCLB requires schools and school systems to bring every child up to state standards within a finite period of time and to close achievement gaps based on race ethnicity, language, and income" (Cohen, 2002, p. 1). The federal government now has the power to dictate "the methods of measuring improvement, the pace of improvement, ...[the consequences] for those who fail to meet the mark" (Reville, 2002, paragraph 1).

The federal government is mandating methods, pacing, and consequences, but they do not have any influence on the design and implementation of standards from the state. According to the National Research Council (NRC, 1999), standards vary greatly from state to state in terms of the details of what children should know and be able to do and the level of challenge.

Standards differ in the extent to "which they guide policy and practice, some being so general that they make it difficult to make valid inferences about student performance or to provide clear guidelines for instruction. Some standards are so extensive that teachers cannot address them comprehensively, and test designers cannot include them all on assessments" (Commission for Economic Development [CED], 2001, p. 6). Many states are still "learning how best to design and implement standards" (CED, 2001, p. 2). Ambiguity and vagary abound. For example, 47 states have adopted content standards for English, math, and science, but only 23 states have developed assessments aligned with the standards, as shown in Figure 11.1. Figure 11.1 shows the number of states, from 1998–2001, that have adopted standards and developed assessments aligned with those standards.

Such discrepancies can have an impact on state compliance with NCLB. Many states will have to rush the development of standards and assessments aligned with the standards, a process that takes time, commitment, and money. States must establish baseline data at the end of the 2002–2003 school year, which assumes that states have the necessary standards and assessments to determine baseline data. It appears that many states will be in the sea of this reform while they are still building the boat. The potential exists for large numbers of schools and children to be labeled low performing and subjected to changes in curriculum in an effort to bring them up to the level of proficiency as defined by the state—labels that may be based on data lacking reliability and validity. Those schools will have a high population of students whom the policymakers assume will be the benefactors of this reform. The ones who suffer and will continue to suffer the inequities in reform are the poor students and the minority students (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

NCLB is wrapped in the rhetoric of improving the achievement in persistently low performing schools and schools that succeed with some children but not all. "Fueled by the poor test performance of inner-city students.... [NCLB has] given rise to an over reliance on high-stakes testing as a vehicle for accountability" (Townsend, 2002, p. 222).

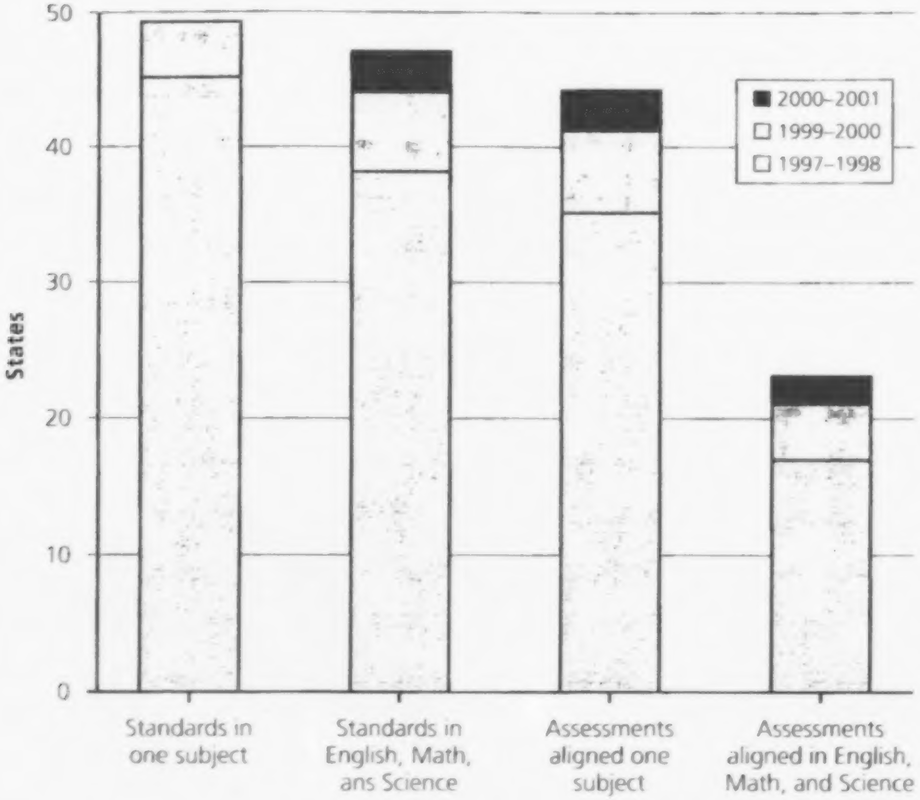

Figure 11.1. Standards and assessments at the state level. Source: *Education Week*, Quality Counts 2001.

According to Elmore (2002), this legislation is "the single largest—and the single most damaging—expansion of federal power over the nation's education system in history. The federal government is now accelerating the worst trend of the current accountability movement: that performance-based accountability has come to mean testing and testing alone" (p. 2).

A high-stakes test environment is generated by the linkage of student performance on assessments to rewards and sanctions for students, teachers, administrators, and the entire school (Clinchy, 2001; Kohn, 2000; McNeil, 2000). Supporters on both sides of the accountability debate view the changes in classroom practices, which may result from a high-stakes test environment, as one of the keys to the success or failure of accountability systems in increasing equity for all children.

Many believe that the development of standards with testable results will push teachers and schools to transform instruction in such a way as to ensure all students' success on standardized tests (McNeil, 2001; Paige, 2001; Ravitch, 1995; Tucker & Codding, 1998). The CED (2001) states that "transforming schools to focus on performance requires the ability to mea-

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sure what students know and how well schools are succeeding in meeting the goals of improving academic achievement.... Without standards that articulate expectations for students and measures of their performance on the standard, we have no way of gauging the success or failure of educational systems" (p. 2).

"In the eyes of the public, assessment can legitimize the existence of a given educational system and communicate to society how far its expectations for schooling are being met" (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996, p. 115). Assessments serve other purposes, and two of those are motivation and diagnosis. As a motivational tool, the notion is that the "carrot and stick" approach will propel educators and students forward or upward in academic improvement. As a diagnostic tool, assessments can inform educators of students' weaknesses, teachers' weaknesses, curricular deficiencies, and they can guide instruction (Hargreaves et al., 1996).

Critics maintain that "the tests corrupt education, subjugate millions of students to their mechanistic requirements, and limit access to educational opportunity" while others point to the use of tests "in diagnosing educational problems and in prescribing appropriate remedies" for raising test scores (Ravitch, 1999, p. 175). The supposition here is that diagnosis and prescription will increase the likelihood that public schools will embrace reforms to ensure students' success. The linkage of standards and assessments to reforms in classroom instruction offers schools the opportunity to raise student achievement and improve educational equity across race and social class (Cross & Joftus, 1997). "Standards and assessments promote educational equity by demanding all students achieve at higher levels.... Low income schools suffer the most in the absence of standards" (Cross & Lieberman, 1997, p. 24).

Others are concerned that the transformations in instruction that do take place, as a result of accountability-based reform, are not beneficial to the learner. High-stakes tests place pressure on teachers and principals to focus planning and instruction on the test, disregarding some of the other important aspects of schooling and other subjects (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Herman, 1992; Kohn, 2000; McNeil, 2000). This extreme focus narrows the curriculum for teaching and learning. This narrowing of the curriculum will be greater in schools that serve a high population of poor and minority children, which are the schools with the greatest need to improve scores (Hillard, 2000).

Some view the narrowing of the curriculum as the purveyor of a new form of discrimination. The narrowing of the curriculum is a result of changes in the use of class time and changes in the types of instruction taking place in the classrooms. For three weeks or more before testing, class time is spent on test preparation—content drills and strategies for choosing the best answers (McNeil, 2000). Time is taken away from more involved learning activities such as research papers, debates, extended reading assignments, science experiments, and more; the time is given to the technical process of taking the test (McNeil, 2000). In *Quality Counts 2001*, a report based on a nationally representative survey of teachers, "nearly seven in 10 teachers said instruction stresses state tests 'far' [too much] or 'somewhat' too much. Sixty-six percent (of the teachers) said the state tests were forcing them to concentrate too much on what is tested to the detriment of other important topics. Nearly half reported spending 'a great deal' of time preparing their students in test taking skills" (Olson, 2001, p. 8). Some students are enrolled in test preparation classes that last anywhere from six weeks to a semester. When test preparation becomes a curriculum in and of itself students lose depth and breadth in their learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

According to Ravitch (1999), "improving academic performance across the board and reducing gaps among different groups of students require clear academic standards and good tests of student performance in relation to those standards" (p. 451). Still others point to the potential for high-stakes testing to "amplify and to attenuate stratification (of students)...based on family background" (Muller & Schiller, 2000, p. 210). With the advent of accountability-based reform, test scores may rise, but at what cost? The most disadvantaged schools have the lowest test scores and their students have the potential of paying costs well above the monetary cost of the struggle to raise test scores (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Dorn, 1998; Linn, 2000; McNeil, 2000).

Some maintain that accountability-based reform takes the issue of student achievement out of its social context (Voke, 2001), forgetting that contemporary social crises are influenced by the historical vestiges of slavery followed by years of de jure and de facto segregation. Ohanian's (1999) indictment of standards, and the assessments that go along with them in accountability-based reform, may be harsh, and even an overstatement of the situation, but it comes closer to the reality of the situation. Ohanian states,

> It is dishonest and demeaning to imply that twelve language arts tenets will lift students out of poverty, give them equal educational opportunity, or even improve the education being offered to them. It is morally bankrupt to cooperate with politicians and corporate CEO's in preaching "world class standards" while burying the real problems of political malfeasance, corporate greed, and the shocking number of children living in poverty under a cloud of semantic obfuscation. Such tactics lead to the deforming rather than the reforming of educational opportunity. (p. 39)

Given the foregoing, what is the effectiveness of accountability-based reform?

EFFECTIVENESS OF ACCOUNTABILITY-BASED REFORM

"The theory underlying all these accountability efforts is that by tying rewards and sanctions to school performance, low performers would improve. However, after a decade of reform, the historically low performing schools and districts tended to remain the poorest achievers in their respective districts and states" (Ginsberg & Berry, 1998, p. 45). In the minds of some people, the students who have historically not done well on standardized tests reap the benefits of the changes in curriculum and teaching strategies brought about by accountability (Ravitch, 2000; Tucker & Codding, 1998). On closer examination, some believe those who have not done well in the past will be subjected to an education that might raise their test scores, but it will be substandard as compared to the education of other students who will continue to garner the benefits of enrichment and more challenging subject matter (Kohn, 2000; McNeil, 2000). "High stakes accountability policies exact the highest toll on the school experiences of poor and minority students often reducing their schooling to little more than test preparation" (Wheelock, 2000, p. 19).

Differential achievement in academic performance among student subgroups has been at the root of many educational reform efforts. "The focus has generally been on efforts to reduce the performance gaps between subgroups, while increasing the achievement of all students" (U. S. Department of Education, 2000, p. 31). The differences in the 1994 and the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA are found in the established timelines for compliance and the requirement for evidence of adequate yearly progress. The expectation with the previous legislation was that subgroups of students would improve academically. According to the most recent Nation's Report Card, gains have been made in student achievement overall, but the gap in achievement between some subgroups continues to exist (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). National statistics show greater numbers of low socioeconomic status (SES) students than middle or high SES students scoring in the lower quartile of standardized tests in history, mathematics, reading, and science. The statistics also show greater numbers of Black and Hispanic students in the lower quartile on standardized tests (see Table 11.1 for results in history).

A trend present in the data is the apparent widening of the gap between Black and White students (Figure 11.2). The graphs in Figure 11.2 show the differences in test scores in reading and math for Black and White children. The lines on the graph represent the scores of Black students subtracted from the scores of White students. For instance, in 1986 there was a difference of 20 points between Black and White students on the NAEP reading scores. From 1980 to 1988, there is a *reduction* in the difference in scores

Table 11.1. Twelfth Graders' Achievement on NAEP History Test by Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status, 1992 (distribution by score quartile)

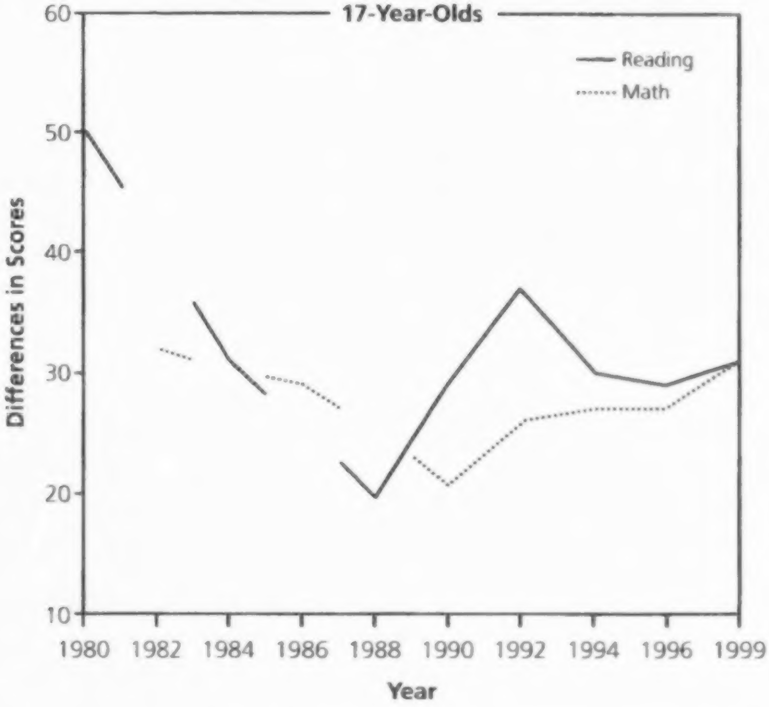
Achievement Test	*Race/Ethnicity*			*Socioeconomic Status*		
	White	*Black*	*Hispanic*	*Low*	*Middle*	*High*
Lower quartile	15.5	39.6	32.4	37.6	20.5	7.9
Middle and upper quartile	51.8	49.6	52.4	52.0	54.6	45.7
High quartile	32.7	10.8	15.3	10.3	24.8	46.5

Source: U.S. Department of Education (1998) National Center for Education Statistics, the Condition of Education.

between Black and White students. From 1988 to 1999, there appears to be an *increase* in the difference between the scores of Black and White children. This trend is present in the subject areas of mathematics, reading, and science, and this trend is occurring at the elementary, middle, and high school grade levels (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Educational stakeholders continue to search for ways to remove the gaps in student achievement. Currently their conversations and debates are about accountability-based reform and its impact on raising student achievement for underprivileged youngsters. Some believe that increasing the level of accountability for students, teachers, and administrators is the pathway to greater equal educational opportunity, while others question the validity of this belief. "Of particular concern in these polarized debates are questions of equity, notably in what ways accountability systems affect the education of low-income children of all races, but especially children of color" (Scheurich et al., 2000, p. 294). The analysis of several states' accountability systems show there are positive and negative impacts of accountability on equity. As an example, many educators and politicians point to the Texas accountability system, which is held up as a model for school reform and has been headlined as a "miracle or a myth" (Sacks, 2000).

Examinations of states that have fully implemented accountability-based reform reveal some intended and unintended consequences. In Texas, the test scores of minority students have improved, but there are greater numbers of minority students than other students being denied graduation or retained in lower grades because of test failure (Gratz, 2000; Hillard, 2000; Johnson, Freeman, & Fuller, 2000). The results are similar in Kentucky (Kentucky Department of Education, 1999), Florida, North Carolina, and other states (Scheurich et al., 2000). The question of equity effects of accountability systems sparks debates in the political and educational arena, and there is evidence to support both sides of the debate (Scheurich et al., 2000).



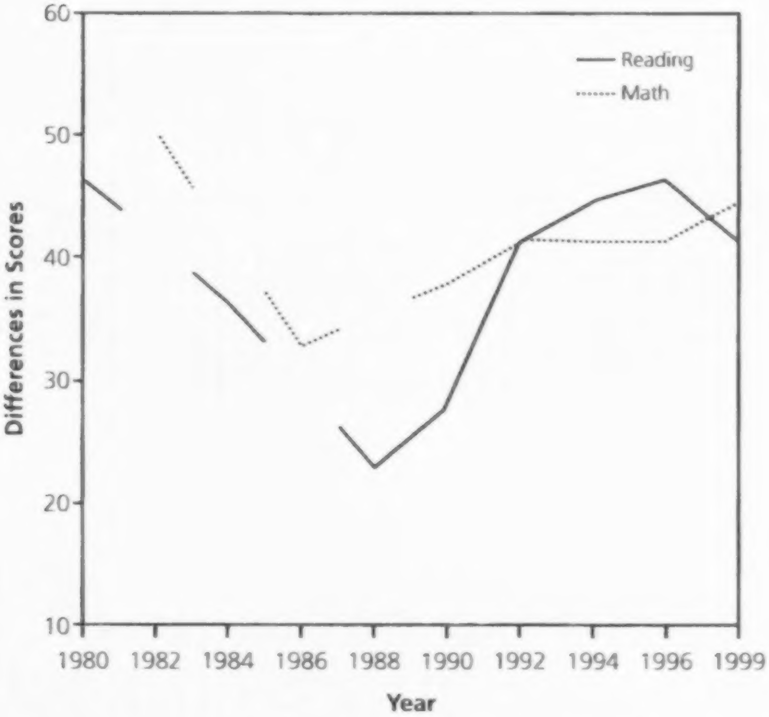


Figure 11.2. Trends in Differences between White and Black Students' *Average Scores on NAEP Tests Across Years*. Source: U.S Department of Education (2000). National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1999 Long-Term Trend Assessment.

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Test results on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills have improved consistently over the last several years for every subgroup of students, and the gap in achievement between Black and White students has narrowed (Hoffman, Assaf, & Paris, 2001). A separate report by Haney (2000) substantiates that these facts are accurate. Haney's report also indicates adverse effects of the accountability system that do not show up in an analysis of the test results alone. Haney looked at the passing rates by subgroups and found that minority students have a lower pass rate than nonminority students.

Schools in Florida have also experienced mixed results on their statewide assessment, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. The good news in Florida is that test scores are improving for all children, but the bad news is that "the scores of White children improved even more than minorities causing the achievement between Whites and minorities to grow even wider than ever" (Gough, 2001, p. 486). In 2003, 10th-grade students in Massachusetts must pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment exam. "Fully 80 percent of African American and 85 percent of Hispanics would not graduate based on 1999 test results. That's compared to a 45 percent failure rate for White students" (Sacks, 2000, p. 8).

The fact that there are losers and winners is not a reason to retreat from accountability-based reform. "Instead, the nature of the losses must be examined and an appropriate set of policies crafted to minimize [the losers]" (Betts & Costrell, 2001, p. 10). According to Betts and Costrell (2001) there is reason to question the "tradeoffs between some students' losses and others' gains in learning and whether equity can be achieved by raising standards when there are still schools that are significantly lacking in resources attempting to meet the needs of the high population of disadvantaged students" (p. 15). Notwithstanding the debates and the conflicting results for some children,

> the new rules of engagement in K–12 education include mandatory learning and accountability.... In the accountability model, school systems as recipients of public funds have an obligation to demonstrate that they are doing their jobs, that their students are in fact learning. If they fail to do so it is reasonable for the public—parents and legislatures in particular to demand change.... (Educators) must recognize that the public owns public education and, whether educators like it or not, the public is calling for accountability. The public has translated its demand for accountability into standards and high-stakes tests. (Daggett, 2000, p. 67)

IMPLICATIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Critical theory permits a view of research and literature on accountability-based reform, as specified in No Child Left Behind, within the aperture of social justice (Kanpol, 1999). Critical theorists take on the challenge of deconstructing "the power of dominant narratives" in framing the issues and problems of education that exclude marginalized voices from the conversation, for schools are "neither neutral or passive in the face of social crisis affecting youth from marginalized communities" (Kanpol, 1999, p. 6). In fact, schools are active participants in the perpetuation of racial and social inequities (Rizvi, 1993).

As the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 becomes the battlecry for accountability in America's public schools, African American students continue to be left behind and marginalized by the system. The purpose of this Act "is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments" (NCLB, Sec. 1001). One of the goals is to close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers.

Educational reforms can be emancipating or repressive in their impact on the learning of children (Giroux, 1997; Ward, 1993). "Schooling constructs borders...it enables and/or constrains relations of power...and these relations not only influence cognitive capacities, but also speak to the way in which power is inscribed in the body, culture, space and subjectivity" (McLaren & Giarelli, 1995, p. 4). Central to the beliefs of critical theorists is "the need for educators to rethink the relations between the center and the margins of power" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 189).

Schools should be places where all students are actively engaged in conversations about history and society and how history and society relates to them as individuals as well as improving their minds. Education can conceivably free the marginalized groups from the status quo they did not ask for, but only if educators stop and listen to the voices of those who are being judged by a set of scores on a test. Clinchy (2000) suggests the new accountability system is "a flagrant and open violation of the basic human education rights of the citizens of this nation" (p. 497).

Since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954, 1955), which resulted in the dismantling of the "separate but equal" philosophy, African American students' lives have become devoid of the social structures and support systems that were vital to their education attainment and academic achievement. The desegregation of public schools, seen as a method to provide equality, equity, and quality in schooling for African American students, not only did not provide these things but also wedged a gap between African American families, the school, and the community (Jackson, 2001). Kozol (1991) documents the financial inequities that exist from school to school and district to district in spite of legislation aimed at removing the disparities and he illuminates the faces of the children—the faces of children of color.

According to research (Ginsberg & Berry, 1998; Wheelock, 2000), external accountability reforms are not able to alter local practices. Racial discord and the power of poverty create a "dysfunctional educational culture that is incompatible with school reform and any effective accountability that could meaningfully enhance schooling" (Ginsberg & Berry, 2001, p. 48). "The failure of educational reform…is political, economic and cultural. These deep structures must be changed before meaningful school improvement projects can be successful" (Anyon, 1998, p. 219).

Compounding the implementation of accountability-based reform that is fair and just for all is the curriculum or the body of knowledge that is presented to students in the hope that they will acquire the skills and information that are necessary to obtain success and be competitive in today's society (Jackson, 2001). The question of whose knowledge continues to plague policymakers who are responsible for drafting the standards for student learning. Education must be inclusive, not exclusive, which is what happens when only the perspectives of the dominant culture are studied. The exclusive nature of the curriculum precludes the fact that when teachers do not know anything of other cultures, it becomes an even greater task to teach children of other cultures. A doctor would no more attempt to treat a patient without first knowing his or her history than a teacher should attempt to teach a student without first knowing something of their history and culture. Inherent in knowing is an acknowledgment of how these variables impact individuals' behaviors, learning styles, and culture.

Rawls's (1971) *Theory of Justice,* suggests two principles for the creation of a fair and social institution.

> The first requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties, while the second holds that social and economic inequalities, for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just only if they result in compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged member of society. These principles rule out justifying institutions because the hardships of some are offset by a greater good taken together. It may be expedient but it is not just that some should have less in order that others may prosper. However, there is no injustice in the greater benefits earned by a few if the situation of persona not so fortunate is thereby improved. The intuitive idea is that since everyone's well being depends on a scheme of cooperation without which no one could have a satisfactory life, the divisions of advantages

> should be such as to draw forth the willing cooperation of everyone taking part in it, including those less well situated. (p.15)

According to Rawls (1971), social justice concerns the relations among the members of a society. In addition, his first principle ensures our rights in relation to each other and our rights in relation to the government and that the liberties we share are the same for everyone. The second principle, however, is a bit more complicated, and goes to the heart of accountability.

When Rawls (1971) spoke of social and economic inequalities in his second principle, he meant inequalities in power and wealth. Moreover, although Rawls recognized that it was impossible for everyone to have the same wealth and power, he believed that those inequalities must "benefit…the least advantaged" (Rawls, 1971) and that everyone be granted the opportunity to acquire wealth and power.

A long-stated goal in the United States has been that all students, regardless of family background or life circumstances, should benefit from education, however, this has not always been the case, especially among African American students. In accordance with the principles that Rawls lays out, it is not acceptable for the majority culture to achieve academic success while the underprivileged African American students lag behind, as evidenced by mounting statistics nationwide. It may be easier to educate those students that enter school able to read and write, but it is neither fair nor just to do so at the expense of others. The less fortunate must in some way benefit from what the majority culture is receiving. Furthermore, Rawls (1971) suggests that there be intervention on behalf of the disadvantaged, simply because all advantages (economic, personal, social) are arbitrary, and they should not be punished because of life circumstances.

A social justice framework within the context of education targets the need for liberation of oppressed students so they can develop a "voice" for participation in a changing society (Thompson, 1998). This involves equal treatment, access, and outcomes for children from oppressed or underprivileged groups. Although education has improved for disadvantaged students and students of color since *Brown v Board of Education* (1954), underprivileged people continue to have much less access to quality education. A mere 10 years ago Kozol (1991) painted a picture of two worlds in our public schools, a pretty portrait of the socially and economically advantaged and an ugly montage of children in poverty. The *No Child Left Behind* legislation seeks to level the playing field for all our students, increasing resources to public schools that will enable them to implement standards and test all students based on these same standards. Unfortunately, the Act does not address the continuing financial inequities that exist in schools. Children, who are trapped in poverty, will continue to have limited opportunities for success.

Accountability for African American students becomes somewhat of a travesty when school conditions continue to be consistently, systematically, and disproportionately unequal and unfair. The major causalities have been those students who differ significantly in social class, race, ethnicity, and gender from what is considered the "mainstream" (Darling-Hammond, 1995). Schools remain unjust institutions when they continue to condone policies and practices that fail to recognize the identities of some students while overvaluing others (Nieto, 2000). Policies and practices of instruction, tracking students, and recruiting and hiring of staff and development of curriculum and the selection of textbooks and materials are just some of the measures that continue to provide an unfair advantage for some, and academic failure for too many children of color. Accountability based reform seeks to increase student achievement, however, this cannot happen so long as public schools continue to operate under financial conditions that perpetuate social inequalities in education. The execution of *No Child Left Behind* without significant funding to level the playing field must be questioned, because there will never be any social justice if the needs of the underprivileged are not met.

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PART II

TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ACHIEVEMENT

CHAPTER 12

HISTORICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES ON BLACK ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Debunking the "Acting White" Myth and Posing New Directions for Research

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INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement and motivation among Black youth have been controversial and hotly debated topics for some time. Unfortunately, a myriad of bad research studies and conceptual flaws have always plagued research in this area, leading to much misunderstanding and damage in opportuni-

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ties for African American youth. Originally, the major flaw in scholarship was an assumption of the biological inferiority of African Americans: the notion that Blacks were genetically deficient in intellectual abilities compared with Whites. Several different lines of pseudoscientific data, ranging from craniometry to IQ testing to mythical views of human evolution, were used to promote this view (Gould, 1996). The theory of biological inferiority is still posed on occasion (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969; Rushton, 1995), although it has been debunked repeatedly by many scholars (Gould, 1996; Lewontin, Rose, & Kamin, 1984).

Although notions of Black biological inferiority still pervade the subconscious stereotypes of many scholars and laypeople, there is another flaw that is perhaps even more sinister: the argument of *cultural inferiority*. According to this view, the blame for academic underachievement rests with different assumed cultural attributes that are ascribed to African Americans. For example, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) contend that due to the historical circumstances of slavery and oppression, African American culture inherently promotes an oppositional stance to mainstream White America, one that devalues academic achievement as "acting White." Although they acknowledge the adverse impact of structural and symbolic racism on Black achievement, Fordham and Ogbu tend to lay much of the blame for underachievement on assumed Black cultural attributes. Ogbu's (1985) penchant to "blame the victim" is an interesting perspective given other analyses. For example, he makes the case well for a parallel identification process in the case of immigrant minorities; that is, group members frequently identify with their homeland and persist in their achievement orientation as newcomers, although frequently having few objective resources except hopefulness for fair treatment and equity. However, Ogbu neither carefully analyzes, links, nor integrates the relative performance of the second generation of immigrant youth whose behavioral coping strategies often resemble those referred to by Ogbu as caste-like minorities. In sum, particularly for identifiable minorities, there is no consideration of youths' contextual American experiences and their internalization or potential reactions to stigma within but one generation of emigration (see, e.g., Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991).

The argument of cultural inferiority is dangerous because it is espoused not only by conservative commentators but also by many liberals who seem well meaning and purport a desire to be sensitive to the plight of African Americans. Thus, the argument has gained sympathy in mainstream and liberal circles. Nonetheless, theories of cultural inferiority suffer from several major conceptual flaws (Spencer & Harpalani, in press). They neglect or minimize within-group differences and are highly deficit-oriented, focusing largely on negative outcomes (e.g., Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951). Instances of resilience—the success demonstrated by many African American students in spite of numerous barriers—are largely ignored. Theories of cultural inferiority also neglect or misunderstand the peculiar history of African Americans, a history of oppression but also of success and survival against tremendous odds. In addition, these theories often suffer from myopic views of culture and gross misunderstanding of culturally linked behaviors and attributes. Also, the argument of cultural inferiority lacks a developmental perspective; it does not consider normative issues of human development that all youth encounter, including African Americans.

To illustrate, as experienced by African Americans across the life course as adults attempting efficacious parenting efforts or youths striving for competence during their youthful transitions, it is an arduous process, at best; because of the stigma associated with group membership, the possession of economic resources may lessen the impact, for some, but does not necessarily obliterate the effect (e.g., the recent "profiling" of Black motorists). That is, irrespective of the specific stage of development, normative challenges are frequently compounded by a broad array of unique stressors; these stressors are inherent in the peculiarly practiced "American-style democracy" and is due generally to unacknowledged structural racism and rampant racial stereotyping maintained in American society. The fact that the situation is unacknowledged is important since it makes parenting efforts more challenging as socializing adults prepare youth to function in a world where additional rules and limitations apply only to them. Accordingly, part of stage-specific normative tasks for youth must include the learning of the additional rules, knowing when they apply and, importantly—from a socialization perspective—learning how to respond! The dilemma continues to be no simple feat—particularly when integrated with traditional gender issues for males.

Furthermore, the unacknowledged and symbolic character of structural racism and stereotyping, particularly experienced at the individual level, makes the combating of its effects more psychologically draining; the unabated struggling requires an excessive use of psychic energy, which removes its availability from other domains (e.g., youths' achievement motivation, parental efforts to monitor youth and parent more generally, and competent occupational role enactment by socializing adults). Much worse, inadequate performance in these traditional and expected roles reinforce the "normative group stigma," thus aiding the maintenance of a system of inordinate stress. In fact, Chestang (1972) characterizes the process as the experience of character formation under hostile conditions. He explains that when the entire group experiences such chronic conditions, solace and strength is accrued by the individual from the group's collective experience and response. However, when social policy changes occur as law but are not actually practiced, in fact, on a daily basis, individuals suffer more since the solace accrued from group confrontation of inequalities is no longer available, thus the experience of an unacknowledged hostile environment (see Chestang, 1972).

Again, of interest is that Ogbu understands the challenging nature of the process and the consequently experienced context character; he describes it quite eloquently when noting the experiences of minority status or, using his term, "castelike" individuals in Japan (e.g., Buraka, Ainu, and Koreans) (e.g., Ogbu, 1985); however, the comparative underachievement of each group's minority youth has never been described as resistance to "acting Japanese (!)." In fact, a synthesis of available literature suggests an interesting experience of Japan's "caste-like minorities" when considered outside of Japan. Specifically, when Japan's "invisible minorities" emigrate to the United States, where the within-group "minority–majority" analysis of Japanese people does not occur, their improved American status as a "favored minority group" is associated with youths' significantly improved and, in fact, oftentimes superior performance (see Hiroshito Ito, cited in Spencer, Kim, & Marshall, 1984).

Accordingly, in this chapter, we begin to debunk the argument of cultural inferiority, using Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) popularized "acting White" hypothesis of Black academic underachievement as an example. First, we briefly review the hypothesis, presenting Fordham and Ogbu's assumptions about history and identity formation. We draw from both their widely cited 1986 paper and from other related work they have conducted separately. We then illustrate shortcomings of the historical assumptions, particularly for the work of Fordham and Ogbu, which is accomplished by laying out a history of academic motivation of African Americans. Our historical account limits itself to coverage both of Black education during slavery—an area that is often overlooked—and post-Emancipation educational efforts. We use several examples to illustrate the resilience and achievement motivation of Blacks throughout all of these historical periods.

Subsequently, we present a theoretical and empirical critique of the "acting White" myth, using several conceptual tools. These include Cross's (1971; Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991) Nigrescence framework, Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological systems theory, and Spencer's (1995) Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST). We debunk the myths about identity formation inherent in the "acting White" hypothesis, and pose important issues to consider when examining the phenomenon of Black academic achievement.

THE "ACTING WHITE" MYTH

In their well known 1986 paper, Fordham and Ogbu posit that one of the main reasons that Black students do so poorly in school is that "they experience inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance in regard to academic efforts and success" (p. 177). They further state that the cultural orientation in the Black community is that learning is equated to "acting White." The authors classify minorities into three groups: 1) autonomous minorities, who are minorities primarily in the numerical sense (e.g., Jews and Mormons); 2) immigrant minorities, who came to America voluntarily with the hopes of improving their lives; and 3) castelike or involuntary minorities (i.e., Blacks, Native Americans, and Chicanos), who came to America involuntarily via slavery or conquest (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1991).

Focusing on the so-called castelike minorities, specifically Blacks, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) claim to examine the expressive dimension of the relationship between minorities and the dominant culture. Factors that make the relationship between African Americans and Whites unique are the twin phenomena of oppositional cultural identity and oppositional frame of reference (Ogbu, 1994). Fordham and Ogbu believe that African Americans develop a sense of identity in opposition to the social identity of Whites because of how they have been treated in America, specifically in economic and political domains. The "oppositional" frame of reference refers to the development of protective devices aimed at (reactively) promoting Black identity and maintaining boundaries between Blacks and the dominant culture.

According to the authors, children learn and understand these twin phenomena early on and an associated feeling of identity and belonging spill over as "fictive kinship"—the intense sense of group membership and loyalty that extends beyond typical family relations. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) contend that the concept of fictive kinship began with the exploitation of Blacks during slavery. There was a tendency for Whites to think of Blacks as one big monolithic group. This membership must be both chosen by the individual and given by the group. There is an emphasis on group loyalty in situations involving conflict and competition with the majority group. Fordham and Ogbu suggest that these ideas influence children's perception of their potential for success (see also Fordham, 1988, 1996).

Through integrating these various ideas, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) claim that Black students, especially adolescents, attending both integrated and predominantly Black schools face the burden of "acting White." Their academic effort and success are held back by external and within group factors. According to the authors,

> Apparently, Black children's general perception that academic pursuit is "acting White" is learned in the Black community. The ideology of the community in regard to the cultural meaning of schooling is, therefore, implicated and needs to be reexamined. (p. 203)

Fordham (1988, 1996) also contends that Black students who are successful must adopt a "raceless" persona, distancing themselves from Black cultural attributes. Thus, Fordham and Ogbu suggest that Blacks have not historically valued education (or perhaps come to school as a "blank slate") and define academic achievement as a White cultural attribute. Their analysis is quite simplistic when compared with a view that considers the multifactorial and "layered" persona that is more consistent with the group's complex, historically unique, and context-linked American experience which is concurrently evolving as individual lives unfold across the life course.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) assume that African Americans have little motivation to achieve academically due to the oppositional frame of reference that was created by years of slavery and oppression. It is commonplace for many observers of the Black experience to assume that slavery made impossible any sense of achievement motivation. In this traditional interpretation, it is suggested that from slavery forward, Blacks have struggled, not only with external sources of oppression but with the effects of slavery, such as family dysfunctionality, psychological self-hatred, high rates of criminality, and low achievement motivation. This "mark of oppression" (e.g., the legacy of slavery) (Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951) is linked to a "culture of poverty" in which pathological behaviors are sustained by Blacks, themselves, even after certain structural barriers, which, once legally limited Black aspirations, have been removed, curtailed, or destroyed, outright.

In the current work, we address the historical evidence that traces the evolution of what we call BAM, or Black Achievement Motivation. Our interpretation of the historical record is that any attempt to draw a straight line between contemporary Black educational problems and slavery is essentially historical and naive, at best. Rather, the record shows that from the end of slavery and well into the 20th century, Blacks, as individuals and as a social group, evidenced high achievement motivation. In fact, one is hard pressed to think of any White ethnic group, including Eastern European Jews, who evidenced a higher regard for achievement motivation for the period covered by the end of the Civil War to the early 1930s; of course, one difference that required greater effort on the part of Blacks remains the salient but uncomfortable issue of identifiability: color (see Franklin, 1968). It would appear that the inability of the Black community to translate such high achievement motivation into progressive stages of social mobility has less to do with the legacy of slavery and more to do with the perniciousness and progressively symbolic manifestation of racism and the failure of the larger society to cultivate, compliment, reinforce, and authenticate BAM.

SLAVERY AND BLACK EDUCATION

In setting out to write a small pamphlet on Black education that would cover the slavery period, Carter G. Woodson (1919) was startled at the discovery of enough historical evidence to justify a 454-page scholarly. He notes in the Preface to his text,

> About two years ago, the author decided to set forth in a small volume the leading facts of the development of Negro education, thinking that he would have to deal largely with the movement since the [end of the] Civil War. In looking over documents for material to furnish a background for recent achievements in this field, he discovered that he would write a much more interesting book should he confine himself to the antebellum period. In fact, the accounts of the successful strivings of Negroes for enlightenment under the most adverse circumstances [e.g., under slavery] read like beautiful romances of a people in a heroic age. (pp. iii)

Woodson identified three phases of Black educational activity during slavery: the Phase of Religion & Letters, the Revolutionary Phase, and the Reactionary Phase.

Phase One: Early Black Education as the Teaching of the "Word"

Woodson labeled the first phase "Religion & Letters." This religious phase (1600–early 1700s) saw the leaders and followers of White religious denominations (Protestants, Catholics, Quakers, etc.)

> wrestling with the cancerous hypocrisy of [white] Christians who held slaves. They struggled to find ways to appease their earth-bound guilt and placate a possibly disappointed God. In the surreal logic of the times, men found Biblical passages that justified enslavement; however, only those who were forced to bear the burden of capturing, owning, managing, and burying slaves worked to discover, authenticate, and nourish the souls, or, if you will, the religious potential of the captive Africans. When German Protestants from Slasburg, who were temporarily working in America, expressed scruples about enslaving men, they were assured by a message from home [Germany] that if they took slaves in faith and with the intention of introducing them to Christ, the action would not be a sin, but might prove a benediction. (p. 19)

That Africans would be slaves was said to be ordained by God, but for every slave who died without the "Word" of God embedded in his soul, so should the master of such lost souls be the object of even greater damnation, for it was his religious duty to bring the "Word" of God to the slaves. And as these White men of religiosity, commerce, and power understood the case to be, it was only through the "Word" that one's soul could be spiritually impregnated. Woodson (1919) tells the story of the machinations of masters to find ways to "teach" the slaves without awakening in them notions of freedom. Were it not for the grisly subject at hand, there are moments when sections of Woodson's book can lead the reader to spontaneous laughter, as when he, Woodson, describes the fits of competition various religious groups engaged in, as each positioned itself to be more self-righteous and efficacious than the other in bringing the "Word" to the slaves. More to the point, early Black education is linked to White men trying to salvage their own White souls through a process that required them to teach the Bible to the slaves; and in introducing the captive Africans to the "Word," we become witness to some of the earliest moments of Black education in the New World. In short order, some missionaries or religious officials went so far as to organize schools for Negroes, as did Elias Neau in New York City around 1704 (Woodson, 1919). By 1708, he was instructing as many as 200 slaves; however, the school was forced to shut down rather suddenly, when, in the aftermath of a slave rebellion, it was discovered that many of the rebels were former students of Neau's education adventure.

Phase Two: The Revolutionary Period, 1720–1780

Many Blacks who achieved an education during this first period were not able to pass their knowledge and skills on to the next generation, although some did. However, an expansive critical mass of Blacks was able to systematically teach others during the next educational phase, which Woodson labeled, somewhat awkwardly, the "education as a right of man." Simply put, the period of the American Revolution (circa 1720–1780) found White men, many of them slave owners, self-reflecting on the nature of the political philosophy that they, as leaders, wanted to use as a blueprint for the new nation. Freedom, liberty, and the rights of all men, along with the sacredness of the individual, were key values etched into the Constitution. The writing of the Bill of Rights, the United States Constitution, and the War of Independence itself could not help but give some White men pause about the moral, religious, and, now, philosophical hypocrisy of owning slaves; the pause suggested dissonance for some since it introduced the issue of their own possible immorality. In a more proactive stance, White men wondered aloud about the inherent rights of all people, including slaves; it also included the consideration of whether or not slaves were, in fact, human. Clearly, this discourse did not lead to the emancipation of the slaves, which would be the aftermath of the American Civil War some 60–70 years later. However, just the discussions alone caused certain ripple effects, each of which reflected an important trend toward Black education.

In thinking about freedom for slaves, in a theoretical sense, certain owners became curious as to whether or not emancipated Blacks could handle freedom and the level of education demanded by one's status as a "free-person"; consequently, certain individual slaves were turned into test cases that fed and satisfied such curiosities. Bullock (1967) describes how one John Chavis of North Carolina was selected as an experimental case and sent to Princeton. Not only did Chavis pass his tests with flying colors, he returned to North Carolina and became a leading teacher for the children of the planter class. Both Bullock (1967) and Woodson (1919) underscore that the atmosphere of the revolutionary period stimulated a certain degree of leniency concerning the formal education of Blacks, and the curiosities and whims of the planters resulted in highly educated slaves. A few became part of the popular culture of the times, including the work of Phillis Weatley, the Black poet, and Benjamin Banneker, the Black mathematician and author of the first *Farmer's Almanac* ever written in the United States. It is during the revolutionary period that the manumission of individual slaves helped produce large clusters of "free-Blacks" in Atlanta, Charleston, and other key cities across the South; and as these clusters of free-Blacks formed communities, the development of formal educational structures became an immediate enterprise.

Another ripple effect was the birth of the Abolitionist Movement. White leaders of this movement took the likes of Frederick Douglass, assisted in his formal education, and turned him loose, as an icon for their movement. Beyond assisting individuals, the movement helped found colleges where scores of Blacks could obtain a higher education. For those Whites who could not fathom a nation that included Blacks, but whose moral compass required that Blacks be educated, manumitted, and, then, sent back to Africa (colonization), they, too, as a prelude to their colonization schemes, created educational opportunities for Blacks, including the construction of schools. Only a fraction of Blacks actually participated in the colonization of what would become Liberia and Sierra Leone, but scores found pathways to formal education under the sponsorship of a movement, which, ironically, hoped to see Blacks "disappear" or just "go away" from America.

It is not the purpose of this work to review in detail all of the Black educational opportunities produced by the clashing of colonizers and abolitionists, the schools owned and run by free-Blacks, or the results of planter-class experimentation, as well as other stimulants to Black education. Rather, our point is to underscore that the ambiguity, leniency, experimentation, and competitive themes of the times made for a very fluid and flexible context, with the result being an explosion in the number of formally educated free-Blacks. Unlike those educated Blacks from the first phase (e.g., religious period), who were largely unable to educate others, Black individuals and emergent Black institutions from the Revolutionary Phase, while meeting great resistance, nevertheless transferred educational gains to the next generation. It is this generation who would be waiting at the gate, as slaves exit from their 400 years in Dante's Inferno on Earth.

Phase Three: Reaction, 1800–1865

Insofar as the institution of slavery was concerned, America's shift to "freedom" and the rights of individuals was a grand illusion. With the invention of the cotton gin and other technological advances, slavery entered its golden age of extreme profitability, and thoughts of experimentation to see if slaves could learn became a fool's folly. (Note that the period was not unlike conditions today with increased technological needs and the import of immigrants for cheap labor.) However, Black educational pathways were smothered by the South's urgency for profit and Northern states began to peel away from the slave model, creating an entire region where Black educational development could reproduce another critical mass of educated Negroes. The education of Blacks in the North did not come easy, for, more often than not, Northerners shared the South's loathing of Black children and adults. However, Woodson (1919) points out that like a virgin stream flowing downhill, Blacks and their White allies were predictably unpredictable in finding successful pathways, despite oppositional forces. The Abolitionist Movement gained ascendancy and its sponsorship of education for a select group of former slaves grew in significance. Programs resulted in the scattering of free-Blacks outside of the Deep South, but they were no less education-oriented in their new homes in the North.

THE BLACK RESPONSE TO FREEDOM: A SOCIAL MOVEMENT FOR EDUCATION

By the end of slavery, the Black community was pregnant with a critical mass of educated leaders, teachers, and potential educational administrators. Du Bois (1935) estimated that 150,000 of the 4 million slaves were able to read and write, and literacy was commonplace among free Blacks. For example, in South Carolina a majority of the nearly 10,000 free-Blacks were literate. A fare share of all literate Blacks turned their attention to the needs of the ex-slaves, when freedom would finally became a reality. However, an educated leadership and a cadre of teachers do not make a social movement. Previous accounts suggest that it was the hundreds of northern school teachers, most of them White, in addition to the material resources and funding provided by the Freedman's Bureau and the federal government, that raised the consciousness of the ex-slaves about the value and necessity for formal education. Certainly such forces and resources can cause a trend, a top-heavy tendency, or a curiosity about education; but these factors alone cannot account for the scope of something as vast as a social movement.

The answer lies in the bosom of the ex-slaves themselves. Illiterate to the person, the ex-slaves seemed to carry educational designs in their ragged pockets as they crossed over into freedom. Rather than slowly, and with great hesitation and bewilderment, following their educated leaders and teachers, they aggressively pushed and acted as a social force for public education. After the Civil War, educated Blacks and their White allies were dumbfounded and even mildly shocked at the level of educational demands the ex-slaves immediately made on themselves and their leaders (Anderson, 1988):

> A teacher at Port Royal declared that he could not "set forth, in anything like adequate terms, the eagerness and determination with which the Black freedmen apply themselves, young and old, to the task of learning the alphabet."
>
> "[Another teacher was greeted by] a motley assemblage [who were] cold, dirty and half naked but eager to learn; [she found them less concerned with food and clothing] but anxious to feel sure that they would have the privilege of coming to school everyday." (Buctchart, 1980, p. 169)

Throughout the South, teachers were overwhelmed by the Black's demand for their services; if a school was announced for 50 students, hundreds of parents sprang forth pleading for the admission of their child. Butchart (1980) noted that even as late as 1867, Washington, D.C., with the largest concentration of freedmen's teachers, reluctantly had to turn away hundreds of prospective students. The hunger for education came not simply from the eyes of children as "many teachers conducted night school as well as day schools to accommodate the aspirations of [adult] workers" (p. 170). Black adult support for the education of themselves and their children was dramatically demonstrated in the State of Louisiana around 1864. Under the leadership of General Nathaniel P. Banks, New Orleans and Louisiana saw Black schools established throughout the state. When word got out that the general tax that supported this venture was to be eliminated, officials received many petitions from the ex-slaves, one of them 30 feet in length and signed with the "marks" of 10,000 ex-slaves who offered to pay a special tax if the schools could be allowed to stay open (Du Bois, 1935).

The drive for Black education was organic; it came from the ex-slaves themselves. One of the foremost experts on the history of Black education, James Anderson (1988), noted:

> [B]efore northern benevolent societies entered the South in 1862, before President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, and before Congress created the [Freedman's Bureau] in 1865, slaves and free persons of color had already begun to make plans for the systematic instruction of [their children and illiterate adults]. Early Black schools were established and supported through the African Americans' own efforts. (p. 7)
>
> Many missionaries were astonished...to discover that many ex-slaves had established their own educational collectives and associations, staffed schools entirely with Black teachers, and were unwilling to allow their educational movement to be controlled by [Yankees]. (p. 6).

Similarly, Butchart (1980) has concluded, "throughout the South Blacks initiated schooling whether or not northern aid was available" (p. 171).

Just after the Civil War, John W. Alvord was appointed the national superintendent of schools for the Freedman's Bureau, and in 1866 he reported that Black-controlled schools numbered 500 and were to be found all over the South. Just three years later, in 1869, Black schools, now often associated with evolving Black churches, totaled 1,512, with 6,146 teachers and 107,109 pupils. This drive toward self-sufficiency and educational independence sometimes made for redundancy. For example, around 1867, New Orleans was the seat of much Black educational activity; however, there was a period when more Black children were enrolled in private Black schools than in schools supported by the Freedman's Bureau (Anderson, 1988). Furthermore, the distinction between "private" and "bureau" schools can be misleading. Because the White South was in financial ruin and opposed funding Black education, Blacks were a major source of financial support for all of the schools servicing their children (Butchart, 1980).

The demand for education and the desire to be taught by Black teachers quickly strained the teaching force that first greeted the ex-slaves and their children. It is often overlooked that the date or origin for historically Black colleges has fallen within a few short years of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. To meet the demands being made by the ex-slaves, educated Blacks, northern societies, and the federal government helped to launch such new entities as Howard University and other Black colleges (Anderson, 1988; Bullock, 1967; Du Bois, 1935).

The drive toward Black education, after the Civil War, can only be given its due if framed as a social movement—not a trend, not a drift, and not a contrivance imposed by White allies from the North. While educated free-Blacks and White allies were crucial elements, the shear scope of the educational demands and depth of these ex-slaves revealed a deep-seated *achievement motivation* that had its origins in slavery itself. As Anderson (1988) noted,

> [B]lacks emerged from slavery with a strong belief in the desirability of learning to read and write. This belief was expressed in the pride with which they talked of the other ex-slaves who learned to read or write in slavery and in the esteem in which they held literate Blacks. It was expressed in the intensity and frequency of their anger at slavery for keeping them illiterate. (p. 5)

It is important to note that education movements appear linked with periods of high oppression and lack of opportunity (e.g., the South African movement) versus war and lack of opportunity.

Studies of the slave culture, covering the period just before the end of slavery, reveal a people who, while illiterate, were well aware of the value of education. It is ironic that the average ex-slave had a more positive and well-developed attitude toward education than that of the average White southerner, who, as must be recalled, was poor, landless, and some years away from a political consciousness about the need for public education and other public institutions. As Du Bois (1935) pointed out, public education in the South was a gift to the South, first presented and pushed by the ex-slaves. However, it is also important to stress that for all of the hunger Blacks demonstrated for education at the onset of their freedom, they showed keen insight into the fact that true freedom was multidimensional. They were aware that "education was a necessary but insufficient means to their primary goals. They welcomed the teachers [and the schools and the learning], but they remained aware that their greatest need was land, justice, protection, and power. Education was but one measure of their freedom and not the most important one" (Butchart, 1980, p. 177). The most important need was for a stake in the economy, and at the time, that meant land. But even then, owning land had little significance without protection and justice. Such concerns were typically codified in laws, which already existed, or in new laws that Blacks might help to fashion. To comprehend existing or new law, one had to be able to read and write.

W. E. B. Du Bois (1935) noted that the ex-slaves' immediate drive for education was one of the most amazing stories in the annals of Western history and culture. Had this drive and achievement motivation been positively received, cultivated, protected, and sustained by the larger society, within 100 years Blacks would have outstripped the social mobility patterns of all groups in modern American society, including Eastern European Jews. They clearly would be major players in all aspects of modern Southern education, from K–12 and higher education. One is hard pressed to think of any White ethnic group who entered the United States at the turn of the 20th century with a collective achievement motivation that could match that exhibited by the ex-slaves on the heels of the Civil War. Accordingly, those who would try to draw a straight line connecting contemporary problems in Black education with the legacy of slavery, such as Fordham and Ogbu (1986), are naive, at best, and ignorant, at worst, of this resilient history.

Reconstruction did not bring the ex-slaves land redistribution, or education, or protection, or liberty, or the right to vote, or social justice. In the face of the second "silent" Civil War, during which the White South defeated Blacks and pushed them face down into the neo-slavery venture known as tenant farming, true freedom for Blacks would not be in reach for another 80 years. Although the White South successfully put an end to all forms of Black self-sufficiency and Black education, the level of collective Black Achievement Motivation (BAM) would sustain itself well into the 20th century. Between 1900 and the 1950s, the White-controlled South distributed educational tax dollars with a formula that radically underfunded Black public education. In fact, most of the money saved was instead funneled by White politicians into the funding of White students. In many parts of the South, there were essentially no educational institutions serving Blacks. During this bleak period (circa 1900–1930), historians have recorded an amazing story. Blacks would often double and triple tax themselves to build and sustain schools, despite not receiving a fair share of tax dollars already paid. Blacks would come together as a community and someone in the group would contribute a small parcel of land for a school. Next, a community summer festival would be organized to collect funds and materials for the new school. Then, if unable to contribute money, men and women would commit their labor to help in the actual construction. In subsequent festivals, held after the school was built, new funds and resources were gathered to pay teachers and to purchase books.

For example, in *Their Highest Potential*, Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) writes about the Caswell County Training School (CCTS), a segregated school for Blacks in North Carolina that ran from 1934 through 1969. According to Walker, teachers and school administrators extended their duties well beyond the classroom to meet the community's educational needs, and community members sacrificed to contribute financially to the school's success. The author goes on to note,

> ...in spite of legalized oppression, many teachers and principals created environments of teaching and learning that motivated students to excel. They countered the larger societal messages to make African American children believe in their ability to achieve. (p. 219)

In effect, Black citizens of Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and other southern states reached deep into their grinding poverty and found the wherewithal—the achievement motivation—that propelled them to support the education of their children. Historical evidence clearly does not support Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) contention that

Black communities have not valued education and that this devaluation is a reaction to White American racism. The assumptions of Fordham and Ogbu (1986) are woefully negligent of the resilience that many African Americans displayed—and continue to demonstrate—in the face of virulent institutionalized practices and unacknowledged and diverse expressions of oppression. Similarly, in addition to the historical inadequacies of their conclusions, Fordham and Ogbu's shortsightedness also fails to consider the role and impact of normal human developmental tasks and responsive processes experienced by Blacks as part of the human family.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESEARCH ON BLACK ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

In addition to neglecting the resilient and persistent history of Black achievement motivation, the "acting White" myth also makes large conceptual errors in its analysis of racial identity and cultural influences on human development. In order to examine issues of identity development and their implications for Black academic achievement, we now introduce several conceptual tools to employ in our analysis. These are used to develop our critique of the "acting White" hypothesis and to posit factors that must be considered when examining Black academic achievement.

Black Racial Identity

Racial identity development refers to the "process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group" (Tatum, 1997, p. 16). Cross's Nigresence model (Cross, 1971; Cross et al., 1991) delineates a four-stage progression through which African Americans form racial identities. During the *pre-encounter* stage, the individual views the world from a White, Eurocentric frame of reference, consciously or unconsciously espousing pro-White and anti-Black attitudes. The *encounter* stage begins to change these attitudes; it involves an event or series of events that cause the individual to realize that he or she cannot fully assimilate into White society and will not be fully accepted into it. *Immersion–emersion* represents a reaction to the encounter stage; the individual becomes more interested in his or her Black identity and also increases his or her racism awareness. This stage may be characterized by anti-White attitudes. *Internalization* occurs as the individual achieves security with his or her Black identity and can move toward a more pluralistic perspective in which African Americans represent the primary reference group but attitudes are not anti-White. The Nigresence framework has been modified to incorporate a more dynamic and flexible view of racial identity development; thus, the stages should not be viewed as a literal progression.

Nonetheless, the stages in the Nigresence framework correspond to racial attitudes (Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001). The pre-encounter stage represents Eurocentrism, the encounter stage characterizes a Transition, the immersion–emmersion stage suggests reactive Afrocentrism, and the internalization represents proactive Afrocentrism.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological systems theory provides an ideal foundation from which to consider issues of social, cultural, and historical context in human development. Ecological systems theory is organized into four levels. The *microsystem* involves the interaction of the person with the immediate social and physical environment; examples include home, family, and school settings. *Proximal processes* are patterns of interactions within microsystems; these change with the development of the individual. The *mesosystem* describes interactions between the various microsystems in the individual's life; it essentially constitutes the network of interpersonal relationships that overlap across the various settings. The *exosystem* entails more distal influence, including the structure of the community where the individual resides and settings where the individual is not directly involved. Finally, the *macrosystem* is comprised of the larger societal institutions, such as the government and the economy, that lay the social and historical context for individual development.

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory: An Identity-Focused Cultural-Ecological Perspective

Spencer's (1995) Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) integrates a phenomenological perspective with Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological systems theory, linking context with perception. In doing so, it allows us to capture and understand the meaning-making processes underlying foundational identity development and outcomes (Spencer 1995, 1999; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). As described by Watson (1968), phenomenology has a long philosophical history that suggests:

> "Things in themselves," the causes of things, are unknowable. Locke and Hume are right, Kant agreed, in saying that knowledge comes from sensory

> perception; but this is perception not of things as they really are, but only as they appear to us (phenomena). Thus, Kant was fostering a phenomenal view. We perceive phenomena, not as they are, but the way our mind makes us see them. The mind selects according to the structures arising from the categories, from the welter of impinging sensations and imposes upon them the unity inherent in the principles. (p. 222)

In sum, a phenomenological analysis does not impose from the outside but rather provides a way of understanding the integration of mind–body experiences through the senses as perceptions. Accordingly, PVEST is a model of human development appropriate for analyzing life-course experiences in a cultural, historical, and cultural-sensitive manner while also sensitive to and capturing the individual's meaning-making processes. Determining how minority youth view and comprehend family, peer, and societal expectations, as well as their prospects for competence and success, is central to understanding resiliency and devising interventions that promote it (Spencer, Harpalani, & Dell'Angelo, in press). As such, PVEST utilizes an *identity-focused cultural-ecological* perspective, integrating issues of culture, social, and historical context, and normative developmental processes involved in identity formation.

A systems theory, PVEST consists of five components linked by bidirectional processes (Figure 12.1); it is a cyclic, recursive model that describes

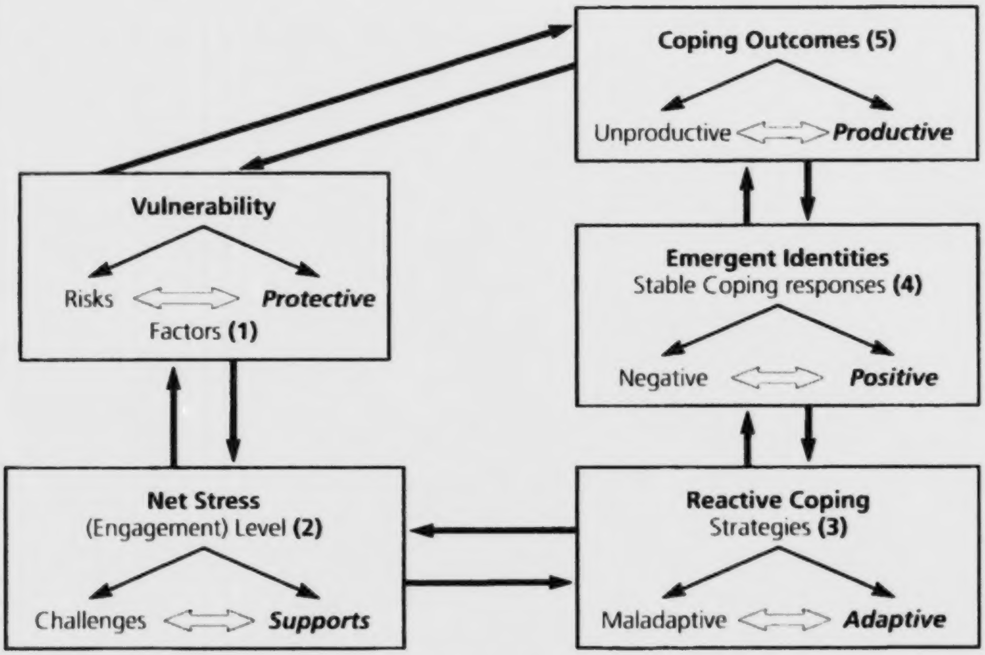
Coping Outcomes (5)
Unproductive
Productive
Vulnerability
Risks
Protective
Factors (1)
Emergent Identities
Stable Coping responses (4)
Negative
Positive
Net Stress
(Engagement) Level (2)
Challenges
Supports
Reactive Coping
Strategies (3)
Maladaptive
Adaptive

Figure 12.1. Phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST) (Spencer, 1995).

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identity development throughout the life course. The first component, *risk contributors*, consists of factors that may predispose individuals for adverse outcomes. The risks, of course, may be offset by protective factors (e.g., cultural capital). For urban minority youth, these include socioeconomic conditions such as poverty, sociocultural expectations such as race and sex stereotypes, and sociohistorical processes including racial subordination and discrimination. Self-appraisal is a key factor in identity, and how minority youth view themselves depends on their perceptions of these conditions, expectations, and processes.

Net stress engagement, the second component of PVEST, refers to the actual "net experience" of situations that challenge one's psychosocial identity and well-being. These are essentially risk contributors that are actually encountered and manifested in everyday life and may be offset or balanced by available supports. Experiences of discrimination, violence, and negative feedback are salient stressors for minority youth. Adult and peer supports serve as protective factors, which help youth cope with myriad stressors.

In response to stress, *reactive coping methods* are deployed to resolve dissonance-producing situations. Normative cognitive maturation makes awareness of dissonance unavoidable and acute. Reactive coping responses include strategies to solve problems that can lead to either adaptive or maladaptive solutions. In addition, a solution may be adaptive in one context, such as neighborhood, and maladaptive in another, such as school. As noted, adaptive or maladaptive coping is related to the supports that are available to offset challenges.

As coping strategies are deployed, self-appraisal continues, and those strategies yielding desirable results for the ego are preserved. Accordingly, they become stable coping responses, and, coupled together, yield *emergent identities*. Emergent identities define how individuals view themselves within and between their various contextual experiences. The combination of cultural/ethnic identity, sex role understanding, sense of efficacy and self and peer appraisal all contribute to and define one's identity. Identity lays the foundation for future perception and behavior, yielding adverse or productive *life-stage, specific coping outcomes*. Productive outcomes include good health, positive relationships, social and instrumental competence, and high self-esteem, while adverse outcomes include poor health, incarceration, and self-destructive behavior.

The PVEST framework recycles and recourses through the lifespan as individuals balance new risks against protective factors, engage new stress levels, given challenges potentially offset by supporters, try different coping strategies, and redefine how they and others view themselves that are associated with specific coping outcomes produced in diverse settings. It is the character of the resultant, stage-specific coping product that has implications of risk experienced as one transitions into the next stage.

A CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL CRITIQUE OF THE "ACTING WHITE" HYPOTHESIS

On a conceptual level, the "acting White" hypothesis can be criticized on several grounds. It draws psychological inferences from sociohistorical data (Trueba, 1988), neglects within-group variation, and fails to understand and capture the psychological and developmental processes that lead to academic achievement and other outcomes. As noted by Obidah (2001), Ogbu (1990) does not account for variation within the so-called involuntary or castelike minorities and fails to note that some members of the majority group demonstrate characteristics he associates with involuntary minorities (McLeod, 1987). Using Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological systems theory, we can see that Ogbu (1987; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) limits much of his analysis at the level of the macrosystem, focusing on the social and historical conditions impacting African American academic achievement. He neglects the micro- and mesosystems, thereby failing to understand how these larger conditions play out in everyday lives. The previous section about the history of Black Achievement Motivation illustrates well how Ogbu's macrolevel analysis falls short in its inferences about the attitudes and motivation of African Americans toward education. It is unfortunate that the uncritical embracing of the theory more likely than not further contributes to the stigmatization of minority group status members.

In contrast to Ogbu, Fordham (1988, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) does focus on microlevel interactions in her ethnographic work. However, simply adding together micro- and macrolevel research does not make the "acting White" hypothesis a sound one. The lack of a rigorous, comprehensive, developmentally sensitive framework leads to numerous shortcomings in both micro and macro aspects of the hypothesis. Numerous studies have demonstrated these shortcomings, and we can employ our conceptual tools to frame these studies.

Trueba (1988) notes that Ogbu (1987) does not take into account microcontextual interactions between language, culture, and cognition. The role of culture in specific contexts needs to be elucidated, in conjunction with the normative cognitive and identity development of African American youth. Bronfenbrenner (1985) describes how Ogbu (1985) neglects the resilience that people often display under adverse conditions, and that he ignores the transience of poverty. In contrast to Ogbu's notion of "ghetto culture" as a static phenomenon, families can often move in and out of poverty, depending on social and historical circumstances, and the impact of culture is also mediated by these phenomena. These critiques reflect the utility of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) and PVEST (Spencer, 1995). By ignoring the important conceptual issues laid out in these theoretical frameworks, Ogbu (1987) both fails to capture how macrosystem influences impact microcontextual interactions, and ignores the role of normative maturational processes in determining how African American youth interpret their own contextualized experiences.

D'Amato (1987) notes that Ogbu (1987) neglects positive dynamics within the social networks of "castelike" minorities, and the possibility for the development of a positive orientation toward school within these networks. In terms of the PVEST framework (Spencer, 1995), Ogbu neither allows for nor acknowledges adaptive coping processes that can lead to positive identity formation; he focuses on maladaptive coping and resultant negative identities with regard to schooling and, thus, reinforces group stigmatization.

Ford, Harris, Webb, and Jones (1994) note that Fordham (1988) neglects the phenomenon of "code switching"—demonstrating different modes of cultural communication and style in different settings—and that Black students can become bicultural rather than "raceless" and thus maintain their ethnic identities. Bicultural identity is one of several different modes of the internalization stage that Cross (personal communication, November 20, 2000) has described in his model. It also represents a particular emergent identity within the PVEST framework, undoubtedly one that is not represented in Fordham's (1988, 1996) or Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) work.

Datnow and Cooper (1996) show the importance of considering coping processes in context, another omission in Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) analysis. In their interviews with 42 African American students, grades 10 through 12, who attended elite, predominantly White independent schools in the Baltimore area, the authors concluded that Black peer groups within the schools actually socialized their members toward academic striving, although some Black students reported negative feedback from Black peers outside of the schools. This provides an illustration of adaptive coping within the school context and shows how peers of the same race within different contexts interpret the same phenomena differently. Suggested is that such within-group variation is also largely neglected by Fordham and Ogbu.

In a study of 562 Black adolescents age 11 to 16 from a southeastern U.S. city, Spencer and colleagues (2001) found that individuals with a Eurocentric orientation, as indicated by a high score in Cross's (1971; Cross et al., 1991) pre-rncounter stage, exhibit lower academic achievement and lower self-esteem than those individuals who have a proactive Afrocentric orientation—the internalization stage. While individuals with a reactive Afrocentric orientation (immersion–emersion stage) performed poorly, the study indicates that a strong, proactive sense of Black cultural identity is associated with positive academic achievement for Black youth. The study by Spencer and colleagues also illustrates the importance of considering both adaptive and maladaptive coping outcomes and shows how Black racial identity can be related to both. It also contradicts the claims of Fordham and Ogbu (1986) and Fordham (1988, 1996), who contend that Blacks must distance themselves from Black culture in order to achieve.

Recent studies employing, large, national data sets have also refuted the "acting White" hypothesis. Using data from the 1990 National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS), a nationally representative sample of 17,544 10th graders, Cook and Ludwig (1998) report several findings that starkly contradict the "acting White" hypothesis. Their analysis indicates that without adjusting for socioeconomic status, about 60% of both Black and White 10th graders in the NELS sample expect to complete a four-year college degree. After adjusting for socioeconomic background, Blacks actually expect to stay in school longer, and other data indicate that they actually do remain in school longer than Whites (Haveman & Wolfe, 1994). The NELS data also indicate no racial differences in school absence; when adjusting for family characteristics, Blacks miss slightly fewer days than Whites. There are also no race differences in reported time spent on homework.

Cook and Ludwig's (1998) data also show the interest and involvement of African American parents in their children's education. Black students in the NELS sample were more likely to report that their parents had contacted their teachers or attended meetings at school. After controlling for socioeconomic status, Black parents were also more likely to attend school events and to check their children's homework. This contradicts the assumption of Fordham and Obgu (1986) that Black parents and community members do not value education.

Peer popularity data from Cook and Ludwig's (1998) NELS sample also do not support the "acting White" hypothesis. The authors report no differences in popularity among Black students by grades in math. Moreover, Black honor society members are significantly more popular than their classmates. Cook and Ludwig also report that academic success has a more positive impact on social status in predominantly Black schools than in White schools.

Ainsworth-Barnell and Downey (1998) critique Obgu's (1991, 1994) oppositional culture framework, noting that the "model's key claims have not received empirical verification...and proponents have failed to systematically compare perceptions of occupational opportunity and resistance to school across involuntary, dominant, and immigrant groups" (p. 537). Ainsworth-Barnell and Downey dispute four hypotheses of the oppositional culture model, also using 1990 NELS data. Their sample included 2,197 African Americans, 653 Asian Americans, and 13,492 non-Hispanic Whites who are all in the 10th grade. Their four hypotheses associated with the oppositional cultural framework, along with the respective findings with regard to each hypotheses, are as follows:

> *Hypothesis 1.* Involuntary minority (African American) students perceive fewer returns to education and more limited occupational opportunities than do dominant (White) students or immigrant minorities (Asian American) students. Data refute this claim. African American students were significantly more likely than White students to report that education was important in getting a job later on and had more optimistic occupational expectations.
>
> *Hypothesis 2.* Involuntary minority students exhibit greater resistance to school than do dominant students or immigrant minority students. This too is refuted by the data: "overall African American students report more positive attitudes toward school than do White students" (p. 541).
>
> *Hypothesis 3.* High-achieving involuntary minority students are negatively sanctioned by their peers for their achievement. In contrast to Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) claim that high-achieving students face the burden of being criticized for "acting White," Ainsworth-Barnell and Downey (1998) found a positive interaction between being African American and being viewed as a very good student. In relation to their White contemporaries, "African American students are seen as especially popular when they are also seen as very good students" (p. 545).
>
> *Hypothesis 4.* Resistance to school accounts for the racial gap in school performance between involuntary students and dominant students and immigrant minority students. The findings of Ainsworth-Barnell and Downey contradict this tenet, finding that when controlling for grades, Black students had more positive attitudes toward school than White students, and when controlling for attitudes toward school, Black students earn lower grades than White students.

It is interesting to note that Fordham and Obgu's (1986) paper was not the first academic article to use the phrase "acting White." The earliest reference we found was a 1970 article by McArdle and Young titled "Classroom Discussion of Racial Identity or How Can We Make It Without 'Acting White.'" The very question posed by McArdle and Young implies is that it is possible to "make it" without "acting White," a notion denied by Fordham (1988) and Fordham and Ogbu (1986). Regarding the Black youth that they interviewed for this paper, McArdle and Young state, "Their goal, to have equal rights and opportunities without 'acting White,' strengthened a sense of being 'Black and beautiful'" (p. 137)—essentially to be successful and to reach Cross's (1971; Cross et al., 1991) internalization stage. This example suggests that these Black youth do not define success as "acting White," but rather that they perceive that a racist society devalues their cultural heritage, and that they are struggling to cope adaptively—to attain success in this society without assimilating and compromising their racial and cultural identities.

As part of normative developmental processes, adolescents of all ethnicities engage in identity searching and strive for acceptance and approval. Cross's (1971; Cross et al., 1991) immersion–emersion stage may be characterized by anti-White attitudes; while this can be maladaptive, it is not an abnormal initial reaction to devaluation, particularly at this salient developmental period. If Black youth perceive a classroom, school, or any other setting as a context where they are devalued, they may cope by defining the expectations of this context as "acting White." However, this is reflective of normative identity development processes rather than a cultural devaluation of education. As Spencer and colleagues (2001) note, "acting White has so many potential variations based on multiple contextual realities" (p. 28). The "acting White" phenomena, as it occurs, is not responsible for Black academic underachievement, nor is it reflective of a broad cultural frame of reference, as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest. It is simply one of many coping responses to feeling devalued.

UNDERSTANDING BLACK ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

Our consideration of the shortcomings of the "acting White" myth leads directly to many issues that must be taken into account when examining Black academic achievement. For Black youth in particular, a consideration of normative human development, which has often been neglected in research—and particularly so for minorities—must be central. Issues of social, historical, and cultural context must also be understood properly in conjunction with identity development; otherwise, observed phenomena may be misinterpreted, as illustrated by Fordham and Ogbu (1986). In addition, all of this work must be cast within a larger theoretical framework, such as Spencer's (1995) PVEST model, in order to ensure that the relationship between context and development is understood thoroughly and appropriately.

It is imperative that researchers consider more broad factors related to the structural racism inherent in American society. Black youth face several salient risk factors that may impede healthy, normative development. Poverty poses major structural risks to success and health for many Black youth. Moreover, poverty is not only caused by racial subordination, it is also exacerbated by racist sociohistorical forces in American society and the misrepresentation of same. To illustrate this point, demographic characteristics of poverty among African Americans must be highlighted. Sampson and Morenoff (1997) reported that in 1980, 85% of poor African Americans lived in impoverished areas, whereas only about 30% of poor European Americans lived in such areas. More than a third of poor African Americans reside in extremely impoverished neighborhoods, as compared to only 7% of poor European Americans. The impoverished communities where poor African Americans often reside are characterized by broadly diverse family structures, less recreational facilities, poor schooling conditions, less availability of role models, and fewer economic opportunities; all have implications for economic growth and stability.

Also, Conley (1999) makes an important distinction between income and wealth. Even when controlling for income, Whites have much greater net worth than Blacks in terms of assets. This disparity has a large and measurable impact on many areas, including the ability of Black families to afford higher education. Thus, the history and ecology of poverty and wealth distribution reflect the legacy of structural racism inherent in American society. In this context of continuing structural barriers, Black youth have both limited access to resources and limited opportunities to visualize and comprehend educational success and attainment for themselves. Thus, in the absence of resources and social supports, stress engagement, including both experiences of dissonance and normative developmental challenges, can yield adverse outcomes such as academic underachievement.

Researchers must also account for the impact of normative developmental processes and challenges, and this is particularly true in the case of Black adolescents. Excluding, perhaps, the second year of life and senescence, adolescence is perhaps the most confusing and vulnerable period of development for all human beings. It is a time of tremendous physical and social change. The onset of puberty and resultant physical maturation herald the onset of new and unavoidable challenges for youth. Physical maturation is accompanied by social changes such as definition of one's sexuality, peer group stressors, and evolving interests, along with greater independence. The individual, according to his or her particular experiences, processes all of these changes, and they result in a continually changing sense of self and identity during this period. Thus, research must take into account the normative experiences of Black youth, the reactive coping processes deployed in response to these experiences, and the emergent identities that result.

In addition to normative adolescent developmental processes, which are themselves quite stressful, other multiple sources of stress and dissonance characterize the experiences of African American adolescents as they begin the process of self-definition. Black youth undergo the normative processes of identity development and character formation in hostile environments (Chestang, 1972). Negative stereotypes, scarcity of positive role models, lack of culturally competent instruction and direction, and the noted problems associated with low socioeconomic status for many high-risk neighborhoods all interact to form complex barriers for these youth. These factors can thwart positive identity formation, which is necessary for resilient outcomes (Spencer & Marskstrom-Adams, 1990).

By the time of adolescence, African American and other youth of color have developed an awareness of White American values and standards of competence. They can begin to integrate their experiences with future expectations given their own values and those of the majority culture. Issues of cultural dissonance also present salient risk factors for minority youth. Adolescents must transition between different contexts, such as school, neighborhood, peer group, and family, while also finding ways to integrate and make meaning of their various experiences within each context. If the contexts are relatively compatible, these transitions can be placid; conversely, the transitions can yield dissonance-producing experiences (Phelan et al., 1991). Spencer (1999) and Stevenson (1997) provide examples of studies that take these issues into account.

The phenomenon of racial stereotyping is another salient stressor that must be considered when analyzing identity development and academic achievement among Black youth. Awareness of racial stereotypes and their own group membership status unavoidably develops and plays a key role in identity formation, as identity and appraisal by self and others become key. Claude Steele's (1997) work on "stereotype threat" provides another example of stress encountered by Black youth, in this case highlighting how these youth perceive themselves. Steele (1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995) finds that African American college students are most vulnerable under conditions when they feel stereotyped as academically inept, and that a coping response to this stereotyping may be temporally distancing themselves from African American culture. These processes are most salient for high-achieving Black youth, who more often have the desire and expectation to succeed. Moreover, a lack of identification with Black culture may create yet another source of stress, vulnerability and dissonance for these youth (see, e.g., Spencer, 1986; Spencer, Dobbs, & Swanson, 1988; Spencer & Dornbusch, 1998; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990).

Note that the phenomenon of "stereotype threat" is quite distinct from the "acting White" myth. The "acting White" myth assumes that Black youth are especially sanctioned by Black peers and communities for succeeding academically and must distance themselves as a result. In contrast, stereotype threat posits that the causes of such distancing, when it occurs, is a stereotypic association between the concepts of "Blackness" and academic failure; this is due to internalization of stereotypes rather than negative feedback from peers and community members.

The impact of racial stereotyping on academic performance can also be more indirect. Harpalani (1999b) notes that negative stereotypes of Black youth as criminal and unintelligent are often reinforced by coupling them with seemingly positive images such as athletic success. For example, Stone, Perry, and Darley (1997) investigated the perception of racial stereotypes in a basketball game. Their findings indicated that Black basketball players were perceived to have significantly more athletic ability and skill than White basketball players, whereas the latter were rated as more intelligent and hard-working. Thus, the notion of African Americans as outstanding athletes—a seemingly positive idea—is, in fact, twisted by notions of innate Black athletic dominance. By attributing Black athletic success to natural ability, the stereotypes of Blacks as lazy and unintelligent are reinforced since the notion that impressive performance represents significant effort and intelligence are ignored.

Additionally, Harpalani (2001) found that descriptors denoting quickness and athleticism are more frequently attributed to Black athletes than White athletes. Harpalani (1999b, 2001) has also noted how Black athletes are often depicted representing other negative stereotypes of Blacks; they are often portrayed in commercials performing acts of violence or buffoonery. These reflect the "brute" and "Sambo" stereotypes of African Americans, as described by Sailes (1998). Presenting these images in the context of athletic competition reinforces the stereotypes in other contexts. The encounters of these stereotypes are salient stressors for African American youth, who, like all youth, are avid consumers of the media. These encounters are particularly salient for African American males, who as a group are extremely vulnerable to social stereotyping.

Another subtle facet of racial stereotyping in schools that can create stress for African American youth is lenient feedback and low expectations from teachers. Harber (1998) describes an empirical study demonstrating that White undergraduates were more likely to provide lenient feedback on the content of a written essay to Black students rather than White students. While more research is needed in this areas to further elucidate explanations for this phenomenon, other work has shown distrust of positive feedback. One study noted by Harber actually demonstrated that Blacks may be so wary of praise from Whites that receiving it may depress their self-esteem; moreover, this occurred only when the Black participant knew the race of the evaluator. Thus, the ways in which Black students cope with feedback also have important implications. This work also gives another example of how a seemingly positive action can have negative consequences.

Finally, although this section has highlighted the challenges faced by Black youth, research should focus not only on underachievement, but also on resilience. In spite of numerous challenges created by structural and sociohistorical factors, cultural dissonance, and racial stereotyping, many Black youth are succeeding academically. We should strive to determine how they have demonstrated such resilience and what we need to do to replicate it.

CONCLUSION

Theories of cultural inferiority, such as Fordham and Ogbu's "acting White" hypothesis of Black academic underachievement, misunderstand the barriers faced by Black youth and misinterpret their contextualized, developmental experiences. They shift the focus away from the barriers that African Americans face in the United States, and from the resilience that many Black youth display in spite of those barriers. Unfortunately, the "acting White" hypothesis has gained much media attention and has influenced other theories of cultural inferiority. For example, in his book *Darwin's Athletes*, John Hoberman (1997) lays out his thesis of a "sports fixation" in the African American community, stating, "...many Blacks and Whites assume that the horizons of Black life are coterminous with the achievements of athletes, and one of the most damaging and least publicized corollaries of the sports obsession has been a pronounced rejection of intellectual ambition" (p. 4). Hoberman then attempts to illustrate the influence of this cultural lens of "sports fixation" within Black America, citing Fordham and Ogbu (1986) to support his argument.

Darwin's Athletes is characterized by many of the same flaws as the "acting White" hypothesis. Microcontextual interactions and processes are not considered, and this omission prevents Hoberman from analyzing individual experiences of Black youth in context and resultant meaning-making processes, which yield coping strategies. The result is a largely pathological inference of "sports fixation," derived directly and entirely from a sociohistorical analysis, and another deficit-oriented treatise on the condition of African Americans (Harpalani, 1999a, 2001).

Recently, John McWhorter (2000), an African American linguist from UC Berkeley, has also applied ideas derived from the notion of Black cultural inferiority in a book titled *Losing the Race: Self Sabotage in the African American Community*. McWhorter compiles personal stories and vignettes in a pseudoscholarly effort to illustrate that Black Americans are generally afflicted with an apathetic mindset toward education, the result of an anti-intellectual cultural upbringing, and that this results in the lack of educational aspiration or academic achievement.

Losing the Race cannot honestly be considered a work of scholarship, but it has received much superficial praise in the media. We choose not to deal with McWhorter's invective here; however, we do refer interested readers to a recently published critique of this work (Gunn, Harpalani, & Brooks, 2001).

In conclusion, we want to emphasize our view that a contextually oriented, developmentally sensitive, and theoretically driven approach to understanding Black academic achievement must replace the current simplistic, deficit-oriented models. We have highlighted the shortcomings of cultural inferiority arguments by using the "acting White" hypothesis as an example and showing its invalid assumptions with regard to history and identity development. We have also posed salient issues for researchers to consider when examining Black academic achievement. It is our hope that assumptions of pathology can be negated, and that we can begin to understand, replicate, and utilize the resilience that so many Blacks have displayed for many years.

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CHAPTER 13

THE IMPUTATION OF BLACK INFERIORITY

Does It Contribute to the Achievement Gap?

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INTRODUCTION

W.E.B. Du Bois was an impeccable scholar in pursuit of the causes and effects of the imputation of Black inferiority. He described the struggle in people of African descent between Africa and Europe,

> a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world...this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others.... One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 3)

Surmounting All Odds, pages 305–343
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Du Bois also accurately stated that the problem of the 20th century was the problem of the color line. Both of these ideas appear in *The Souls of Black Folk,* published in 1903.

In Du Bois's now famous debate with Booker T. Washington, he was on the side of high standards and a curriculum commensurate with the White supremacist elite. After all, Du Bois studied Latin and Greek. He wanted desperately to produce an "African American Talented Tenth." In *Dusk of Dawn,* Du Bois stated that he believed in the higher education of a Talented Tenth who through their knowledge of modern culture could guide the American Negro into a higher civilization. He said, "I knew that without this the Negro would have to accept White leadership, and that such leadership could not always be trusted to guide this group into self-realization and to its highest cultural possibilities" (1968, p. 70). Cornell West concludes in his book, *Race Matters,* the following: "To be a serious black leader is to be a race-transcending prophet who critiques the powers that be (including the black component of the Establishment) and who puts forward a vision of fundamental social change for all who suffer from socially induced misery" (1994, p. 70). West seems to be the Talented Tenth that Du Bois wanted. The question is: Can all Black people transcend race even if they want to do so? Can we have a color-blind society or practice? If so, why have we not begun to implement Du Bois's fourth solution, "a racial attempt to use the power of the Negro as a consumer not only for his economic uplift but in addition to that, for his economic education" (1968, p. 208).

Booker T. Washington was more concerned with the follower than the leader. He wanted to help the masses of African Americans to find work in order to eat. His idea was to train them to do the basics and to make a decent living. He said, "...general political agitation drew the attention of our people away from the more fundamental matters of perfecting themselves in the industries at their doors and at securing properties." (Harlan, 1972, pp. 258–259). Du Bois and Washington clashed over these issues. Some African Americans now believe that Du Bois should have thought more about the masses and that Washington should have thought more about civil and social rights. Du Bois did seem to reconcile his position with Washington later. He said, "These two theories of Negro progress were not absolutely contradictory. I recognized the importance of the Negro gaining a foothold in trades and his encouragement in industry and common labor. Mr. Washington was not absolutely opposed to college training, and sent his own children to college" (1968, p. 70).

From another orientation, Carter G. Woodson argued for a curriculum that included African history, literature, culture, and accomplishments. He did not believe that the study of the same curriculum that produced the White supremacist leadership could produce one for Africans. Through the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, the creation of Negro History Week, and his book, *The Miseducation of the Negro* (1933), Woodson spread his vision.

This chapter attempts to integrate these ideas emerging in the first decade of the 20th century to practices now occurring in education in the 21st century as well as ask three questions: (1) What is the effect of the imputation of Black inferiority on the achievement of African Americans who are visible as compared to those who are not (can pass for White)? (2) Why are researchers pretending that high standards and accountability are new ideas and practices when they have been in place for Whites at least since Du Bois's vision of the Talented Tenth? (3)Why does standardized testing become an issue now when it was not questioned prior to the success of Asians and to the advancement of minorities of color? The hypothesis which these questions generate is this: The imputation of Black inferiority contributes to the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites on standardized tests.

WHAT IS THE IMPUTATION OF BLACK INFERIORITY?

Most African Americans approach the problem of racism in an interesting way. They talk about White supremacy and White superiority. Most European Americans talk about the problem in another way. They talk about or imply Black inferiority. This myth is translated into many practical behaviors such as racial profiling, poor teaching, discrimination, and oppression. The imputation of Black inferiority has made African Americans a pariah. Blacks do not want to discuss race because they do not want Whites to see them in this way. Whites do not want to discuss race because they do not want to be labeled racists. So, it is simply not discussed. Consequently, our social order is in chronic denial of racism or the belief in the inferiority of people of African descent.

George C. Homans argues in *The Nature of Social Science* (1967) that "any science has two main jobs to do: discovery and explanation. By the first, we judge whether it is a science, by the second, how successful a science it is. Discovery is the job of stating and testing more or less general relationships between properties of nature" (p. 7). He goes on to say,

> I want my students to be able to distinguish operating definitions and real propositions from two other kinds of sentence, similar in form to definitions and propositions respectively, which appear very often in the literature of social science, particularly introductory texts and in "general theory." These I call "nonoperating definitions" and "orienting statements." (p. 11)

Race is such a nonoperating definition. West says, "In short, blackness is a political and ethical construct" (1994, p. 39). This is as close as he comes to giving us a definition and it is nonoperating. Just who is a Black person?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states in its report, *The Race Concept: Results of an Inquiry*, that

> the concept of race is unanimously regarded by anthropologists as a classificatory device providing a zoological frame within which the various groups of mankind may be arranged and by means of which studies of evolutionary processes can be facilitated. In its anthropological sense, the word 'race' should be reserved for groups of mankind possessing well-developed and primarily heritable physical differences from other groups. Many populations can be so classified but, because of the complexity of human history, there are also many populations which cannot easily be fitted into a racial classification. (Bruno, 1986, p. 221)

In the United States this definition is applied without the caveat. For example, race here usually means a classification on the basis of skin color, hair type, and head/eye/nose/lip size and shape. Berry and Blassingame (1982, p. 126) state that "Fugitive slaves, for example, were frequently described as having 'straight hair and complexion so nearly White that a stranger would suppose there was no negro blood in him,' or as having 'light sandy hair, blue eyes, ruddy complexion; he is so nearly White as to easily pass for a White man.'" They conclude that race is determined by visibility and reputation. Du Bois concluded that race was defined by a group of contradictory forces, illogical facts, and irreconcilable tendencies (1968, p. 133). Thus to Du Bois "it is easy to see that scientific definition of race is impossible" (p. 137).

So the operational definition of race in the United States is the following: If you have black skin (any hue of brown) and nappy hair, you become Black. If you have white skin and straight hair, despite having big lips, nose, head, you become White. People of African descent pass for White every day. Two weeks after moving into my new condominium on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago, I was in the laundry room washing clothes when another owner entered and asked me whether or not I was using all of the machines. When I told her that I was only using four, she told me to tell my employer that I was to use only three. I asked her why I should tell DePaul University that and she began to apologize profusely. This revealed the connection between skin color and physiological traits to the imputation of Black inferiority. It is the same phenomenon which works when cab driver refuse to pick up visible Black people, when police disproportionately stop Black drivers, when the law provides for disparities in jail terms between Blacks and Whites for similar offenses, and when university faculty members use such terms as "fit" to exclude visible minorities.

DePaul University is unequivocally committed to diversity. It is the largest Catholic university in the United States. To this end, an Assistant for Diversity was hired to advise the President and a Diversity Initiatives Committee was created to investigate the causes for the small number of minorities hired as faculty and to make recommendations for remedies. The Committee made the following report.

> During our review of current hiring practices involving minorities, we interviewed several members of the DePaul community who had served on search committees. Several disturbing trends emerged. First, was the prevalence of a double standard, in which some issues were applied to or raised regarding minorities that were not with similarly-qualified majority candidates: age qualifications (regardless of credentials), theory driven research, teaching/research mix, personality, the value of life experiences, biased, agenda-based teaching philosophies or lack of them, ethnic self-identification or authenticity, accent or dialect, rumors and the ubiquitous "fit." To elaborate, qualifications of minority candidates seem automatically suspect while those of majority candidates are assumed valid.

The report concluded:

> We must rethink what we propose as diversity. If, by diversity, we mean skin tone and the underlying, unspoken assumption that we are all culturally the same, i.e. inhabitants of some amorphous White culture, then these concerns make sense. If, however, we mean by diversity, multiple cultural approaches, communicative and interactive styles, and ways of being and seeing in the world, then our current practices fall short. The Diversity Initiatives Committee strongly supports this broader sense of diversity. As a university, we need to be more accepting of other ways of seeing and being. While one's cultural style may feel uncomfortable to another, all must own their discomfort and recognize that it signals their cultural preferences rather than some universal sense of best practices. Learning to interact in a variety of cultural styles would enhance our ability to work with our students and in the world. (Speicher, 1998)

We are left with an unscientific nonoperating definition of race. When former President Ronald Reagan talked about a color-blind society, he meant blind to all colors except Whiteness.

In her article, "Whiteness as Property" Cheryl I. Harris (1993) discusses race and the emergence of Whiteness as property. She describes her Mississippi-born grandmother.

> Her fair skin, straight hair, and aquiline features had not spared her from the life of sharecropping into which she had been born in anywhere/nowhere, Mississippi—the outskirts of Yazoo City. But in the burgeoning landscape of urban America, anonymity was possible for a Black person with "white" fea-

> tures. She was transgressing boundaries, crossing borders, spinning on margins, traveling between dualities of Manichean space, rigidly bifurcated into light/dark, good/bad, white/Black. No longer immediately identifiable as "Lula's daughter," she could thus enter the white world, albeit on a false passport not merely passing, but trespassing. (pp. 1710–1711)

In this article Harris examines the emergence of Whiteness as property and traces the evolution of Whiteness from color to race to status to property as a progression historically rooted in White supremacy and economic hegemony over Black and Native American peoples. She says:

> The hyper-exploitation of Black labor was accomplished by treating Black people themselves as objects of property. Race and property were thus conflated by establishing a form of property contingent on race-only. Blacks were subjugated as slaves and treated as property. Similarly, the conquest, removal and extermination of Native American life and culture were ratified by conferring and acknowledging the property rights of Whites in Native American land. Only white possession and occupation of land were validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights. These distinct forms of exploitation each contributed in varying ways to the construction of whiteness as property. (p. 1716)
>
> Thus a white person "used and enjoyed" whiteness whenever she took advantage of the privileges accorded White people simply by virtue of their whiteness—when she exercised any number of rights reserved for the holders of whiteness. Whiteness as the embodiment of white privilege transcended mere belief or preference; it became usable property, the subject of the law's regard and protection. In this respect whiteness as an active property, has been used and enjoyed. (p. 1734)
>
> The law relied on bounded, objective and scientific definitions of race—what Neil Gotanda has called "historical race"—to construct whiteness as not merely race, but race plus privilege. By making race determinant and the product of rationality and science, dominant and subordinate positions within the racial hierarchy were disguised as the product of natural law and biology rather than as naked preferences. Whiteness as racialized privilege was then legitimated by science and was embraced in legal doctrine as "objective fact." (p. 1738)
>
> Case law that attempted to define race frequently struggled over the precise fractional amount of Black "blood"—traceable Black ancestry—that would defeat a claim to whiteness. Although the courts applied varying fractional formulas in different jurisdictions to define "Black" or, in the terms of the day, "Negro" or "colored" the law uniformly accepted the rule of hypodescent (a system of racial classification in which the subordinate classification is assigned to the offspring if there is one "superordinate" and one "subordinate" parent)—racial identity was governed by blood, and white was preferred. (p. 1738)

The United States Census has changed its categories or classification system of race. People can now choose what race they want to be if they are biracial and multiracial. The lead article in *Newsweek* ("The New Face of Race," 2000) discussed this redrawing of color lines and redefining of race, saying, "It is not just a matter of black and white anymore; the nuances of brown and yellow and red mean more—and less—than ever...." This would seem a significant breakthrough but Harris's (1993) analysis may shed more light on this scheme. She says:

> In undertaking any definition of race as group identity, there are implicit and explicit normative underpinnings that must be taken into account. The "riddle of identity" is not answered by a "search for essences" or essential discoverable truth, nor by a search for mere "descriptions and re-descriptions." Instead, when handling the complex issue of group identity, we should look to "purposes and effects, consequences and functions." The questions pertaining to definitions of race then are not principally biological or genetic, but social and political: what must be addressed is who is defining, how is the definition constructed, and why is the definition being propounded. Because definition is so often a central part of domination, critical thinking about these issues must precede and adjoin any definition. The law has not attended to these questions. Instead, the identity of "the other" is still objectified, the complex, negotiated quality of identity is ignored, and the impact of inequitable power on identity is masked. (pp. 1763–1764)

Finally, Harris examines the affirmative action position of the courts.

> The Supreme Court's rejection of affirmative action programs on the grounds that race-conscious remedial measures are unconstitutional under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment—the very constitutional measure designed to guarantee equality for Blacks—is based on the Court's chronic refusal to dismantle the institutional protection of benefits for Whites that have been based on white supremacy and maintained at the expense of Blacks. As a result, the parameters of appropriate remedies are not dictated by the scope of the injury to the subjugated, but by the extent of the infringement on settled expectations of Whites. These limits to remediation are grounded in the perception that the existing order based on white privilege is not only just "there," but also is a property interest worthy of protection. Thus, under this assumption, it is not only the interests of individual Whites who challenge affirmative action that are protected; the interests of Whites as Whites are enshrined and institutionalized as a property interest that accords them a higher status than any individual claim to relief. (pp. 1767–1768)

All of these property rights assigned to Whiteness exacerbate the imputation of Black inferiority in the social order.

DO HIGHER STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES MITIGATE THE IMPUTATION OF BLACK INFERIORITY?

Recently, in many large cities of which Chicago is one, higher standards have been applied along with greater accountability measures to elevate and accelerate student achievement as measured by standardized achievement tests. These changes were a result of the constant and persistent underachievement of many poor and minority students aggregated in these great cities. The change in demographics in the United States has added to the urgency of these changes.

Reform in Chicago has been occurring at least since 1982. On July 1, 1982, Dr. Alice C Blair, then Deputy Superintendent for Education Services in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), issued "A Discussion Paper for Improving General High Schools in Chicago," authored by an appointed Task Force Committee headed by Ora B. McConner. This paper emanated from a mandate to improve secondary education in CPS by Ruth Love, the General Superintendent. The report cited the following problems: social promotion, students passed on from grade to grade without meeting the requirements for success at the next level; low achievement, with less than 30% of students meeting the national norms; decreased budget appropriations, inadequate support from the state legislature; an instructional program made ineffective by provisions mandated in the collective bargaining agreement with teachers, the most complicated of which were the steps required for dismissing incompetent or insubordinate teachers; lack of uniform and clearly stated standards of achievement, which was the cause of social promotion; poorly defined roles for department heads in the high school especially regarding time allocated for course release and departmental meetings; varying levels of knowledge, skills, and commitment of administrators and teachers for meeting students' needs caused by insufficient support for professional development; inadequate support for the secondary school at all administrative levels and insufficient counseling services (Blair et al., 1982).

These Chicago educators used Ronald R. Edmonds's work as a theoretical framework for their report. Edmonds challenged James S. Coleman's thesis that family background outweighed school effects in the production of student achievement in schools. Edmonds and his colleagues investigated low-income schools where students were achieving the same as students in more advantaged schools. They found the following correlates in effect in the former: (1) a strong administrative leader; (2) a climate conducive to learning; (3) a safe, orderly, humane, and secure environment; (4) a consistent emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills: (5) high expectations for student achievement; and (6) frequent monitoring (Edmonds, 1979;

Edmonds & Frederickson, 1981; Levine & Havighurst, 1992). The Chicago educators' report offered the following recommendations for implementation: (1) emphasize basic skills, stress high expectations for students' achievement; (2) emphasize teachers' and principals' responsibility for high student achievement; and (3) offer systematic, sustained, substantive instructional programs. A subcommittee issued a plan for students not reaching an 8.0 reading level by age 15 and one half. These students would be programmed into the high school and placed in a core curriculum (providing basic skills) based upon the students' needs and taught by qualified teachers who should also hold a reading endorsement. (Blair et al., 1982).

By 1988 it was fairly clear that the problem with CPS was student achievement, student attendance, and student dropout rates. Chicago had been accused of having the worst school system in the United States by William Bennett, then the Secretary of Education. As a result, in December 1988, the Illinois State Legislature adopted a school reform package (P.A. 85-1418) that changed not only the structure but the governance of public education in Chicago (Shipps, Kahne, & Smylie 1998). At the implementation of the legislation, in 1990, the percentage of CPS' students at or above the national norms in reading on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), grades 3–8 combined, was 23.5% and 27.1% in mathematics. In grades 9–11 combined, the percentage of students at or above national norms in the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) in reading was 30.6% and 21.6% in mathematics. Although Shipps and colleagues, as well as Hess (1999), argue that the goal of the 1988 reformers was student achievement, the emphasis of the 1988 reform legislation was on governance, not accountability.

To illustrate this point, in 1994 a clarifying letter was sent to Albert Shanker by one professor directing a university-based research unit, stating, "While we agree that improvement in student achievement is the appropriate long term standpoint, the position articulated in your column seems to imply that it is also the primary measure for short term judgment ....In my view, the overemphasis on immediate improvement in student achievement will ultimately undermine all efforts to promote the deep-seated changes needed to improve the effectiveness of schools." The deep-seated changes were: tests derived from the standards-based curriculum; smaller, more community oriented schools; instruction based on best practices designated by research studies; decentralized governance; a longer school day and school year so that teachers could plan and participate in professional development; and more diffused decision-making to distribute power.

What the law did specify was the creation of 550 Local School Councils (LSC), one for each and every school unit, consisting of 11 members of whom six were parents, two teachers, two community representatives, the principal, and in high schools, a student. Only a parent could be the chairperson. To the LSC were given: (1) authority to hire and fire contracted principals from whom all tenure rights were stripped at the same time teachers retained their hiring and tenure rights; (2) the control over State Chapter One Funds that were redirected to schools, avoiding central and district office interference; and (3) the right to determine and approve the School Improvement Plan (SIP), renamed the School Improvement Plan for the Advancement of Academic Achievement (SIPAAA), required by the state.

During the construction of this legislation, reformers completely ignored the history of decentralization provided by New York City (Ocean Hill–Brownsville) where a teachers' strike paralyzed community efforts to fire incompetent teachers in 1968 (Levine, 1969); Washington, D.C. (Anacostia and Adams-Morgan), where school board interference prevented the devolution of power to the regional superintendents in 1974 (Sizemore, 1981); and its own Woodlawn Experimental School District (WESP, 1967–1971), where a collaboration among three groups, The Woodlawn Organization (TWO; founded by Saul Alinsky), the University of Chicago and CPS, failed because the boundaries of power, especially those describing exactly what the collaborative could control, were incompatible with the imperatives of school operation or the job descriptions and mandates of school administrators (Sizemore, personal communication, 1970). Consequently, these Chicago community leaders, most of whom were White, middle-class, educated males, proceeded in all good faith with governance theories now instituted into law. Hess (1991) stated that the 1988 legislation removed from the central board its authority to appoint and control principals, limited central control over curriculum, and mandated a reduction in central office staff (see also Shipps et al., 1998).

In 1992 Argie Johnson became the last General Superintendent under the 1988 school reform laws. During her short tenure (1993–1995) she attempted to implement her plans for the elevation and acceleration of student achievement in CPS. She separated the schools into three tiers: those at or above national norms in reading and mathematics on ITBS and TAP, those near national norms, and those substantially below national norms. Her plan provided additional support and resources for those schools near and below using Chapter One Funds. Johnson was the former Deputy Chancellor for the New York City Public Schools and Superintendent of District #13 in Brooklyn's Bedford–Stuyvesant neighborhood in New York City from 1988–1992.

Johnson served under J. Jerome Harris, Community School District #13 Superintendent from 1974–1987. From 1979–1989 District #13 had shown more growth in student achievement through implementation of Edmonds's effective schools paradigm, establishing the correlates he advocated and using traditional and direct instruction, than the highly touted

District #4 had through choice and innovations. (Harris, 1988). Yet, David L. Kirp, in his 1992 article, "What School Choice Really Means," celebrated District #4's achievements and relegated District #13's higher accomplishments to a parenthesis. Johnson was the first to stress student achievement as the system's highest priority since Ruth Love. Many 1988 reformers saw Johnson's plans as a serious attempt to undermine the powers of the LSC. Their campaign against her plans was so vigorous that she was never able to mobilize groups who were interested in student achievement gains and accountability.

In 1995 the state legislature amended the 1988 legislation with Illinois House Bill 206 giving control of CPS to the mayor and emphasizing central management and accountability in order to address the still-egregious problems of low student achievement, attendance, and graduation rates. By 1994, the percentage of students achieving at or above national norms in reading for grades 9 and ll combined on the TAP had dropped from 30.6% in 1990 to 22.2%, increasing from 40.4% in the bottom quartile to 49.1% in mathematics from 21.6% in 1990 to 20.7% in 1994, with an increase from 51.8% in the bottom quartile to 55.5%. The 1995 legislation maintained the LSCs and suspended the School Finance Authority (SFA).The central office was replaced with a Chief Executive Officer, CEO, a Chief Education Officer, and a five-member Reform Board of Trustees. According to Shipps and colleagues (1998), "unprecedented fiscal flexibility" was given to the Mayor and the Board of Trustees, "removing all barriers to privatization and allowing the dismissal of employees within fourteen days if outsourcing removed their positions." But most important to the 1988 reformers, the law sent all increases in State Chapter one Funds to the district, leaving LSCs' share at 1994 levels. "Teachers' strikes were prohibited for eighteen months and certain items were stricken from the bargaining list in the school code so that individual schools were authorized to waive collective bargaining agreements if more than half of the faculty agreed" (Shipps et al., 1998). Paul Vallas, Mayor Daley's former budget manager, was appointed CEO in July 1995; and Mayor Daley named his former Chief of Staff, Gery Chico, Chairman of the Reform Board of Trustees. Together they began their assault against low achievement with aggressive accountability, taking on the neglected and woefully low-achieving city high schools.

Vallas's plan had several major components: (1) redesign plan for restructuring the high school; (2) the development of clear high standards; (3) the removal of incompetent or unsuccessful principals; (4) the placement of schools on remediation, probation, or reconstitution; and (5) the redirection of Chapter One Funds to external partners, probation managers, and other mentoring and monitoring personnel. Universities, agencies, corporations, and organizations were invited to help CPS achieve its objectives. To facilitate the operation of reform initiatives, six administrative regions were formed, each stretching from the Eastern or Lake boundary of the city to the western city limits, thus minimizing but not eliminating the effects of racial housing segregation in the city on central school organization. The Office of Accountability was also established to oversee and monitor the reform's implementation. In 2000 CPS reverted back to a superintendency and established a seven member Board of Education, although the Mayor retained the CEO model.

In 1992, Gladys Styles Johnston, the former Chancellor of the University of Nebraska at Kearney, was the Provost at DePaul University in Chicago. Her assistant Provost, Carol Camp Yeakey, now Professor of Urban Politics and Policy at the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, recruited me to serve as Dean of the School of Education, and I was selected. Prior to this event, at the University of Pittsburgh, I followed Edmonds's effective schools paradigm along with Carlos Brossard and Birney Harrigan, and we studied three schools with predominantly African American student populations living in low-income census zones characterized by crime and violence and where 75% or more of these students were achieving at or above national norms on standardized tests from 1979 through 1992 (Sizemore, 1985, 1987, 1988; Sizemore, Brossard, & Harrigan, 1983).

Every teacher and administrator in these schools was interviewed, and more than a thousand hours of classroom observations were conducted. In each of these schools, where 90% or more of the students scored at or above national norms on the ITBS, Edmonds's correlates were observed. Moreover, each school had institutionalized the Structured Ten Routines (STR), which contributed to the high achievement: assessment, placement, pacing/acceleration, measuring, monitoring, discipline, instruction, evaluation, professional development, and decision making. A routine consists of activities designed by the users to achieve a goal. In the high-achieving schools serving students living in low-income census zones, there was consensus among the teachers around high achievement as the highest priority and a commitment to reaching these achievement goals.

Sets of these high-achieving schools were located in Dallas, Texas during the 1980s. Asa Hilliard began finding additional schools among African Centered Independent Schools in Los Angeles, California. These schools openly fought against White supremacy. He said, "Years of miseducation can only be corrected if teachers and teacher trainers take a proactive stance" (1997, pp. 107–108). Observations and interviews confirmed the presence of the correlates and the 10 routines in the Dallas set. In addition, District #13 in New York City, previously mentioned, and the 12 experimental schools in Atlanta chosen for improvement by J. Jerome Harris when Superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools also exhibited the effective schools correlates. In the fall of 1992, several members of the Board of Trustees at De Paul University flew with me to Pittsburgh to interview the principals of the schools in that set to observe them. Very impressed, the Board members were committed to helping CPS with its reform efforts. From this beginning, an outreach program was established at De Paul called the School Achievement Structure (SAS).

The goal of the model was and is to elevate and accelerate student achievement through an effective principal as instructional leader. The initiation stage establishes a vision/mission for the school, creates the language of effective schools, focuses on the process, disaggregates the student achievement data, identifies strategies, and develops a SIPAAA. The implementation stage selects an instructional leadership team (ILT), establishes standard operating procedures based on STR, and develops school-wide committees to problem solve and to implement the SIPAAA using STR. When all routines are operational as standard operating procedures, STR has been institutionalized in that school.

SAS helps to implement STR by placing in each school a full-time or part-time coordinator, depending on the agreement, consultants in reading and mathematics, and a mentor for the principal. The majority of the school community stakeholders must agree to initiate, implement, and institutionalize STR. In the past two years of 13 probationary high schools using STR since 1994, eight have been removed from probationary status, and of 15 probationary elementary schools, eight have been removed. Of 38 elementary schools using STR from 1993 through 2000, only three exhibited a growth loss. The gains ranged from a low of 1.5 percentage points to a high of 31.9 percentage points. Of the 13 high schools, there were no growth losses and a range of growth gains from 29.2 percentage points to a low of 5.4 percentage gains.

Chicago Public Schools have made gains also since 1995. (See Appendix for a summary analysis of school-wide test data.) High school reading scores are at their highest since 1990, rising from 23.6% at or above the national norm in 1995 to 35.3% in 2000 and from 25.3% in mathematics to 45%. Elementary reading scores rose from 26.5% at or above the national norm in 1995 to 36.4% in 2000 and mathematics scores from 29.8% to 46.7%. In their study of high schools' progress in the implementation of the Board of Education's initiatives there, Hess and Cytrynbaum reported that the advancement in scores (80%) at the high school level was largely due to the elementary school advancement. Although CPS high schools had fewer students in the lowest quartile than is true for the nation as a whole, Hess said this feat was due to "promotion gates installed in 1997 which kept out some of the poorest performing 14 and 15 year olds" (Hess & Cytrynbaum, 2001, p. 4). If this is true, from where did 25–30% of some high schools' enrollments in special education come? Did these student aggregate in the lowest quartile? If they arrived in high school, how is their progress due to teaching in the elementary schools? This high enrollment was exacerbated by the inclusion process mandated by *Corey v. Board of Education.* Many special education students outnumbered regular education students in some inclusion classes. In at least two classrooms in one high school, the number of special education students in the regular education classroom exceeded the state limit. In too many classrooms, there was no special education service provided at all because of too few special education teachers assigned to the school. It is unclear how Hess and Cytrynbaum evaluated these data into their formula even though they included a discussion of the problem under lessons learned. Hess and Cytrynbaum did not look at the imputation of Black inferiority at all nor has the Consortium for the Study of Chicago School Reform. Is the placement of such a large number of African Americans in special education an effect of this imputation?

WHY IS STANDARDIZED TESTING A PROBLEM NOW?

One of the favorite messages given to support the myth of Black inferiority is test data. The genetic inferiority of Africans has been confirmed over and over again by tests. Therefore, it would not be to the advantage of those who proselytize this theory to change the data. What are the present arguments against testing? (1) Standardized tests generally have questionable ability to predict one's academic success; (2) standardized tests tend to be highly correlated with socioeconomic class (note the author did not mention race); (3) standardized tests reward passive, superficial learning, drive instruction in undesirable directions, and thwart meaningful educational reform (Sacks, 1999). Sacks's position is an offshoot of the old Coleman thesis: family background, income, and mother's education count for all the difference. Why then is there an achievement gap between Black and White students of similar incomes, mothers' education, and family background? Sacks argues that the abolition of standardized testing for admissions as in the Texas State University System has resulted in a rise in the number of Blacks admitted, although this is well below Whites and Asians. He does not say from where the rise came. Did the rise result from an increase in those in segregated schools as opposed to those in integrated schools since the imputation of Black inferiority may be fierce in the latter, which depresses the number in the top 10th? Sacks prefers performance assessments but does not deal with the subjectivity of their scoring nor does he explain how it will be better for African Americans if the system switches to them given the pervasiveness of the imputation of Black inferiority throughout the social order.

Gerald W. Bracey (2001) believes that SAT is not the single determinant for college acceptance and argues that he checked the admissions at

Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, to find that the university could have filled two freshman classes by admitting only applicants who scored between 750 and 800 on the SAT verbal; yet the school admitted only one-third of the applicants with these scores while it admitted some students with SAT verbal scores as low as 400. On the other hand, U.S. District Court Judge Bernard A. Friedman rejected the University of Michigan Law School's argument that it needed to use race in order to recruit diverse classes because its policies were too broad. He cited as evidence that the policy intended to enroll a critical mass of underrepresented minority students even though their scores on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and grade- point averages were lower, on average, than those of the rest of the class. He said that the university could not define "critical mass" (Selingo, 2001, p. A29).

Given the intransigence of the society on this matter, it would seem more plausible to pursue the route of improving test scores. Moreover, Sacks does not appear willing to deal with racism. The word does not appear in his index. Bracey, on the other hand, quotes Daniel Koretz, whose analysis shows the effect of cut-off test scores on different minorities, but he does not mention the imputation of Black inferiority as such. Powell notes that

> one opportunity suggests itself, for change through enlightened self-interest. Racism has clearly been strongest where and when it has been most useful in meeting people's needs, interests and wishes. But concepts as affirmative action, assumes that meeting someone's needs means frustrating someone else's needs. Competitive individualism, our national habit of perceiving one another as rivals, tacitly assumes a sort of "economy of scarcity," in which more opportunity for some means less opportunity for others. (1993, pp. 305–306)

Hence, during Jim Crow, affirmative action was for Whites. The Great Depression also occurred during this time. This thesis operates less well when there is unlimited opportunity. Asians are passing standardized tests with higher scores than Whites in mathematics. If African Americans succeed, whose interests are threatened if they too surpass national norms?

Just what can be done to increase test scores if that is the desired outcome to fight against the imputation of Black inferiority? The Chicago Annenberg Research Project (CARP) published a report in January 2000, *Authentic Intellectual Work and Standardized Tests: Conflict or Coexistence?*, by Fred M. Newmann, Anthony S. Bryk, and Jenny K. Nagaoka. They found that the fears that students would score lower on standardized tests due to teacher demands for more authentic intellectual work appear unwarranted. Their evidence appeared to show that assignments calling for more authentic intellectual work actually improved student scores on conventional tests. In the companion Annenberg Report, Instruction and Achievement in Chicago Elementary Schools, Smith, Lee, and Newmann (2001) found didactic instruction is especially common in predominantly African American schools but they did not say why. Didactic is more common in low-achieving schools, African American schools, and large schools. Once again, why? Does lower achievement mean that basic skills have not been acquired?

Yet Smith and colleagues (2001) found that didactic instruction increases and interactive methods decline across grade levels while interactive instruction is more common in classrooms with high levels of prior achievement and didactic and review practices are more common in low-level classes. If didactic instruction is needed by students with low performance levels, why then does it increase across grade levels? When is didactic teaching necessary? When is interactive teaching appropriate? Are they two sides to the same coin, like discipline and instruction? Do teachers use didactic teaching to control discipline as African American students become older? Is the imputation of Black inferiority enforcing this practice?

Hess observed three major problems in the CPS system's weaker high school teachers: (1) some did not know their subject matter very well; (2) some did not know how to get what they knew across to their students; and (3) a third group, which might include some in the other two groups, did not believe their students were capable of learning the material and skills included in the Chicago Academic Standards for high schools (Hess & Cytrynbaum, 2001). To avoid any conclusive statement here, Hess and Cytrynbaum added, "at least not under the current time constraints." How much, if any, of this belief system is colored by the imputation of Black inferiority?

Carter G. Woodson (1933) argues for the integration of African American life, history and culture in the curriculum of African American students. He says:

> No systematic effort toward change has been possible for taught the same economics, history and philosophy, literature and religion which have established the present code of morals, the Negro's mind has been brought under control of his oppressor. The problem of holding the Negro down, therefore, is easily solved. When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his "proper place" and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary. (p. xiii)

The literature on cultural diversity and its importance to the development of the global community and the education of minority students is abundant. Yet more needs to be done to discover the impact of the imputation of Black inferiority on the achievement gap. The research studies of Claude Steele (1999) and Asa Hilliard (1995, 1997) are useful here.

Steele's (1999) work was prompted by the high college dropout rates for African Americans, 20–25% higher than for Whites, and their alarming underperformance. He noticed a phenomenon that he called a "stereotype threat" or "the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype" (p. 46). A stereotype is a simplified and standardized conception or image of a person or group held in common by members of a group, such as that Blacks are inferior. Steele found that the poorer college performance of Black students may have, in addition to a lack of good preparation and identification with school achievement, the threat of being negatively stereotyped in the environment and that what exposes students to the pressure of stereotype threat is not weaker academic identity and skills but stronger academic identity and skills. He says, "They may have long seen themselves as good students—better than most. But led into the domain by their strengths, they pay an extra tax on their investment—vigilant worry that their future will be compromised by society's perception and treatment of their group" (p. 50).

Steele suggested that high standards should be an integral part of teaching and explicit critical feedback should be given in the belief that the recipient can reach those standards in order to combat stereotypic threats. He says,

> The good news of this study is that when they are made explicit, the students trust and respond to criticism. Black students who got this kind of feedback saw it as unbiased and were motivated to take their essays home and work on them even though this was not a class for credit. They were more motivated than any other group of students in the study—as if this combination of high standards and assurance was like water on parched land, a much needed but seldom received balm. (p. 53)

Steele concludes that most of the gap exists because the proportion of Blacks with very high SAT scores is smaller than the corresponding proportion of Whites and Asians, lowering the average of the Black group. Since Blacks are not underprepared in academic skills as their group score deficit is taken to suggest, the deficit can appear large but is not likely to be the sole cause of the troubles they have once they get on campus.

Asa Hilliard's (1995, 1997) work is directed toward the infusion of African life, history and culture in the daily lessons and activities of students. He noes that African Americans have known for some time that something was wrong with the instituted approaches to education in the United States. He believes that Du Bois, Washington, and Garvey were much closer than depicted. Hilliard says,

> I believe that each of those men would have wanted all of what the others were proposing. It was among them an issue of what to do first, under the circumstances. They knew then that neither the education for intellectual self-sufficiency of Du Bois, nor the education for economic self-sufficiency of Washington, nor the education for self-consciousness of Garvey would be allowed. What White people would permit was education for pacification and education that would enable Africans to perform low-level vocational skills. (pp. 36–37)

This permitted education was a result of the imputation of Black inferiority.

Research must be conducted in predominately low-income minority schools, where it is expected to work. University professors must move from the safe surrounding and suburban sites. Overcoming resistance to school reform requires the following: (1) an admission of the presence of the imputation of Black inferiority in the social order: (2) an understanding of its effect on learning and curriculum; (3) teachers' mastery of the content area in which they specialize as well as the English language: (4) the provision of resources in schools that serve the poor equal to those that serve the affluent; (5) the nourishment of teachers' spirits so they will feel able to overcome adversity and win; (6) the development and implementation of professional development plans to help teachers adopt methods that work; (7) the development and establishment of strategies that help teachers deal with human variation in learning and plan lessons that guarantee success for all students; (8) the provision of assistance to teachers and principals regarding shared decision making; (9) an understanding of tests, their uses, and functions in the distribution of employment and educational opportunities; and (10) an understanding on the part of all teachers who use textbooks regarding reading and how a human being best learns this skill.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

When scholars talk about teaching to the test, their conversation is often confusing. First, what exactly does teaching to the test mean? If Newmann and colleagues (2001) are correct, it means teaching students to ask literal, inferential and evaluative questions and solving experiential problems. The authors seem to think that all teachers who teach to the test are teaching test-taking skills and doing drills and worksheets. If the students learn to read with comprehension, teachers are teaching to the test because that is what the tests test. This teaching to the test has become an issue only after its application to minority and poor students, who previously failed them. Newmann and colleagues do not explain why students with prior low achievement do not benefit as much from exposure to demands for authentic intellectual work in reading as their higher-achieving counterparts, nor why the former benefit more than the latter in mathematics. Is there a relationship between culture and reading that is not present in mathematics? Does language support the imputation of Black inferiority more than mathematics?

The study's sample would have had more meaning for educators interested in elevating student achievement in predominately African American schools if data from those schools had been disaggregated and reported separately in comparison with that from others. While the CARP sample was slightly more disadvantaged than the overall school system, the percentage of African Americans was less. Because of the public housing concentration, poverty among African Americans is different from poverty between other minorities and Whites. The unequal distribution of students in special education also should have been noted. The presence of a disproportionate number of these students in regular education classrooms without the necessary assignment of special education teachers should affect the quality of instruction.

Teachers can be taught, however, to improve the quality of instruction by increasing the authentic intellectual work presented if they are provided with sufficient professional development and if this professional development is mandated. Before such activities can be mandated, the time must be provided so that teachers can attend. A longer school day would be necessary if teachers are to be present. This would require more money for salaries. Universities should be required by school systems to provide such instruction or these systems should not hire their graduates or should make the graduates pay for whatever training the university failed to provide.

None of this will happen, of course, if the society is devoted to the maintenance of pariahs and the imputation of Black inferiority. This nation has never been willing to pay for the education of Black people (Anderson, 1988). Anderson (1988) finds that

> the education of Blacks in the South reveals that various contending forces sought either to repress the development of Black education or to shape it in ways that contradicted Blacks' interests in intellectual development. The educational outcomes demonstrate that Blacks got some but not much of what they wanted. They entered emancipation with fairly definite ideas about how to integrate education into their broader struggle for freedom and prosperity, but they were largely unable to shape their future in accordance with their social vision. (p. 285)

Only the future can tell, but if the past is the prologue, the outcome is bleak. While we say we want everyone to have equal opportunity for advancement and progress, including Blacks, we know that equality will diminish the advantages enjoyed by Whites. Capitalism is a fiercely competitive paradigm. It demands winners and losers. Our conflict has always been dramatized by the contradictions between our rhetoric and our behavior. Tests guard the doors of economic and academic opportunity; yet many school reformers want to eliminate tests in schools where they teach or consult but which their children do not attend. Many of these professionals send their own children to Princeton Review, Sylvan Learning Systems, or similar services. Some school reformers abhor violence in schools, yet oppose strong disciplinary routines such as searches and metal detectors. Some school actors complain that they should not be held responsible for student learning in their schools, yet they expect to be paid for doing just that. Students fail in schools, yet for many school educators, it is rarely due to the instructional content, its delivery, or any other school routine. There is a resurgence of the Coleman doctrine.

I believe that the best way to destroy the imputation of Black inferiority is to eliminate the achievement gap between Whites and Blacks on standardized tests. We do know how to do that. Ronald R. Edmonds urged a search for answers to the following questions: "What is the origin of that climate for instructional responsibility? If it dissipates, what causes it to do so? If it remains, what keeps it functioning?" Edmonds posited that effective schools for the Black and poor had a climate of expectation where all children were permitted to learn; they were orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and were conducive to learning. Essentially, effective schools had learning goals for all of the children they served and some means for asserting whether or not their goals had been achieved. He ended his review on an interesting note:

> Whether or not we will ever effectively teach the children of the poor is probably far more a matter of politics than of social science, and that is as it should be. It seems to me, therefore, that what is left of this discussion are three declarative statements. We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do that. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far. (quoted in Sizemore, 1985, pp. 269–288)

Even so, Paul Vallas, Chicago's CEO, was optimistic in 1998 when asked the question, "What is your most important achievement in your three-year tenure?" he responded:

> If there's one thing that has stood out to me, it's the fact that confidence in the system has been restored. People in education no longer view us as pariahs; they look at the Chicago school system and at our principals and teachers with respect. They see many of the things that we are doing as models for them. The fact that we no longer are ostracized from the educational com-

> munity, that we no longer are the focus of attention down in Springfield, that people see us being at the forefront of serious education reform—those to me are the most positive results so far. (Martinez, 1998, p. 1)

That was almost three years ago.

Scholars nipped at Vallas's success and the impatient press attacked him with their sensational guns. The mayor is impatient and anxious to make more rapid progress but did not know how to do better. Vallas's popularity among the people made him safe for awhile, but the press was determined to damage his reputation with the publication of draft reports that attempted to refute the gains he had made. *Crain's Chicago Business* reported the following: "Despite a decade of intense efforts to rescue the Chicago Public Schools, nearly half of the system's students still drop out before graduating from high school and there is little, if any, sign the rate is improving" (Hinz, 2001, p. 1). This was taken from a draft report produced by the Consortium on Chicago School Research. Most social scientists understand that calculating dropout rates is complex. It is very difficult to determine what a dropout is, especially for students who leave the school system or go to jail. African American students are very mobile.

The sleeping African American community, still paralyzed by the terrible loss of the late Mayor Harold Washington, was unable to defend Vallas's changes, which benefited them. Vallas brought the "No Excuses, Children First" campaign to Chicago. For him, every child could and would learn. No one has done more to make that happen than Paul Vallas. He asked the community for help and organized an external partner program overseen by the Office of Accountability to make that happen. He hired mentors for principals and consultants to help teachers. His success was questioned in the name of the very students he was trying to help. He was selected to head the Philadelphia public schools in 2002.

While questions abound about the worth of standardized tests and high standards, social promotion, and retention, the imputation of Black inferiority is ignored. African American students score lower than Whites on tests, make lower grades in school, and go to college in smaller numbers. Consequently, they fail in school. They are either passed on without the requisite knowledge for success at the next level or retained or referred to special education. Much fire and heat have been generated by the debates over high standards and testing, two issues that were relatively obscure when only Whites were enjoying the fruits of both. Retention only became a hot issue after standards were set for all students, not just middle-class and affluent students. Referral of large numbers of Black students to special education hasn't gotten past the rhetorical stage yet. What effect does the imputation of Black inferiority have on the quality of instruction, which produces the sorry results?

Research should begin immediately with surveys of Black parents and students asking whether or not the standard operating procedures and processes, textbooks and school materials used in their schools create feelings of inferiority in these stakeholders. Critical examinations of these textbooks and supplementary materials should be conducted to determine whether or not their contributions and/or omissions impute Black inferiority. The findings from such research should then be used to implement other routines and processes for eliminating those effects. Because of the chronic denial pervasive in the society about race and racism, this will be a long-term project.

In the short term, we can do what we know how to do. We can begin by expecting all children/students to learn. We can establish high standards and teach students what they need to know in order to meet them. First and foremost, every child should be taught to read. Students whose language differs from standard English whether another language (Spanish) or a dialect (African American English vernacular), should be taught a vocabulary that is used in the daily discourse of the classroom, reading comprehension through questions that are literal (factual), inferential, and evaluative, and English grammar. The classroom environment should provide an abundance of reading materials celebrating America and the students' ethnic homelands. (All Americans except the indigenous tribes come from some other place on the planet). Every group has struggled for survival and autonomy and these struggles should be studied with respect. It is not clear that we can do this with our present imputation of Black inferiority. Yet power concedes nothing without the demand, and without struggle, there is no progress.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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APPENDIX
SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT STRUCTURE SUMMARY REPORTS

READING

Elementary School Reports
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) 1993–2000

High School Reports
Test of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) 1994–2000

Change in Percent of Students Above National Norms
Change in Percent of Students in Bottom Quartile
School Removed from Probation

Elementary Schools

Bethune
Brown
Calhoun North
Carver Primary
Clark Middle
Crane Elementary
Curtis
Dodge
Doolittle I & U
Dyett
Emmet
Faraday
Fuller
Goldblatt
Gregory
Howland
Hughes
Kellman
Lewis
Libby
Mayo
Mays Academy
McCorkle
Overton
Paderewski
Price
Reavis
Revere
Sarbaro (Ashe)
Sexton
Sherman
Sherwood
Spalding Elementary
Spencer
Thorp
Tilton
West Pullman
Yale

High Schools

Austin
Calumet
Collins
Crane
Englewood
Flower
Juarez
King
Near North
Phillips
Spalding
Tilden
Westinghouse

School Achievement Structure (SAS)
Percent of Students at or Above National Norms
Measured by the Test of Achievement and Proficiency
High School Reading—1994/2000

High School	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Reading—1994 % at or above National Norms*	*Reading—2000 % at or above National Norms*	*Reading Growth 1994/2000 (percent)*
Austin	September, 1995 1995–1998	4.2	19.9	**+15.7**
Calumet	September, 1995 1995–1997	6.8	21.0	**+14.2**
Collins	April, 1996 Active	5.5	10.9	**+5.4**
Crane	April, 1996 Active	5.8	28.1	**+22.3**
Englewood	September, 1997 Active	3.8	11.2	**+7.4**
Flower	January, 1994 1994–1996	3.9	21.8	**+17.9**
Juarez	January, 1994 1994–1996	13.3	22.3	**+9.0**
King	August, 1997 Active	4.0	22.2	**+18.2**
Near North*	September, 1995 1995–1999	5.2	20.0	**+14.8**
Phillips	January, 1994 1994–1997	5.1	12.9	**+7.8**
Spalding	September, 1998 Active	4.7	17.6	**+12.9**
Tilden	May, 1994 Active	3.8	16.5	**+12.7**
Westinghouse	September, 1995 Active	10.5	39.7	**+29.2**

* Near North test data based on only 15 students due to the fact that school is in process of closing.

School Achievement Structure (SAS) Percent of Students in the Bottom Quartile Measured by the Test of Achievement and Proficiency High School Reading—1994/2000

High School	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Reading—1994 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Reading—2000 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Reading—Change in % of Students in Bottom Quartile 1994/2000*
Austin	September, 1995 1995–1998	73.0	39.8	**–33.2**
Calumet	September, 1995 1995–1997	68.3	29.4	**–38.9**
Collins	April, 1996 Active	75.1	38.1	**–37.0**
Crane	April, 1996 Active	73.7	38.1	**–35.6**
Englewood	September, 1997 Active	83.4	41.9	**–41.5**
Flower	January, 1994 1994–1996	74.3	26.1	**–48.2**
Juarez	January, 1994 1994–1996	59.2	31.3	**–27.9**
King	August, 1997 Active	80.1	32.1	**–48.0**
Near North*	September, 1995 1995–1999	71.2	66.7	**–4.5**
Phillips	January, 1994 1994–1997	71.3	39.6	**–31.7**
Spalding	September, 1998 Active	85.0	32.4	**–52.6**
Tilden	May, 1994 Active	78.8	30.7	**–48.1**
Westinghouse	September, 1995 Active	52.1	11.7	**–40.4**

* Near North test data based on only 15 students due to the fact that school is in process of closing.

School Achievement Structure (SAS) Percent of Students at or Above National Norms Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Elementary School Reading—1993/2000

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Reading—1993 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Reading—2000 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Reading—Change in % of Students at or Above National Norms 1993/2000*
Bethune	September, 1996 1996–2000	10.6	23.2	**+12.6**
Brown	October, 1995 Active	10.2	20.7	**+10.5**
Calhoun North	April, 1996 Active	12.4	22.1	**+9.7**
Carver Primary	January, 1996 1996–1997	21.0	41.4	**+20.4**
Clark Middle	September, 1994 Active	13.2	23.3	**+10.1**
Crane Elementary	April, 1996 Active	18.0 (1996 scores)	48.9	**+30.9**
Curtis	September, 1995 Active	12.2	17.3	**+5.1**
Dodge	April, 1996 Active	12.6	14.3	**+1.7**
Doolittle I & U	September, 1996 1996–1998	12.3	21.0	**+8.7**
Dyett Middle	September, 1995 1995–1996	27.8	25.5	**–2.3**
Emmet	September, 1996 1996–1997	14.2	24.1	**+9.9**
Faraday	March, 1996 Active	10.4	12.3	**+1.9**
Fuller	March, 1996 1995–1996	12.1	20.8	**+8.7**
Goldblatt	January, 1994 1994–1995	16.4	27.6	**+11.2**
Gregory	January, 1994 1994–1996	17.7	32.7	**+15.0**
Howland	April, 1996 Active	21.5	13.4	**–8.1**
Hughes	January, 1994 1995–1996	15.2	37.5	**+22.3**
Kellman Corp.	January, 1994 1995–1996	25.9 (1995 scores)	57.8	**+31.9**
Lewis	September, 1995 Active	16.1	27.2	**+11.1**

School Achievement Structure (SAS)
Percent of Students at or Above National Norms
Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
Elementary School Reading—1993/2000 (Cont.)

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Reading—1993 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Reading—2000 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Reading—Change in % of Students at or Above National Norms 1993/2000*
Libby	September, 1995 1995–1998	9.5	13.2	**+3.7**
Mayo	January, 1994 1994–1995	16.6	27.4	**+10.8**
Mays Academy	September, 1995 1995–1996	18.7	22.0	**+3.3**
McCorkle	January, 1994 1995–1996	6.8	20.1	**+13.3**
Overton	September, 1995 Active	7.9	19.5	**+11.6**
Paderewski	September, 1996 Active	17.4	16.3	**–1.1**
Price	September, 1994 1994–1996	16.8	25.8	**+9.0**
Reavis	September, 1999 Active	27.4	30.5	**+3.1**
Revere	September, 2000 Active	15.4	16.9	**+1.5**
Sarbaro (Ashe)	January, 1994 1994	19.0	29.4	**+10.4**
Sexton	September, 1999 Active	16.1	25.8	**+9.7**
Sherman	September, 1996 Active	11.0	12.9	**+1.9**
Sherwood	September, 1999 Active	14.6	18.2	**+3.6**
Spalding	January, 1998 Active	5.9	28.1	**+22.2**
Spencer	January, 1994 1994–1996	12.6	25.3	**+12.7**
Thorp	September, 1996 1996–1999	11.4	20.5	**+9.1**
Tilton	September, 1995 1995–1999	13.0	23.6	**+10.6**
West Pullman	October, 1995 1995–1998	18.5	27.0	**+8.5**
Yale	September, 1999 Active	13.6	23.8	**+10.2**

School Achievement Structure (SAS) Percent of Students in the Bottom Quartile Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Elementary School Reading—1993/2000

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Reading—1993 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Reading—2000 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Reading—Change in % of Students in Bottom Quartile 1993/2000*
Bethune	September, 1996 1996–2000	54.9	44.0	**–10.9**
Brown	October, 1995 Active	61.6	43.6	**–18.0**
Calhoun North	April, 1996 Active	59.0	48.9	**–10.1**
Carver Primary	January, 1996 1996–1997	52.9	29.3	**–23.6**
Clark Middle	September, 1994 Active	51.7	35.5	**–16.2**
Crane Elementary	April, 1996 Active	55.7 (1996 scores)	12.2	**–43.5**
Curtis	September, 1995 Active	54.3	40.1	**–14.2**
Dodge	April, 1996 Active	59.9	53.7	**–6.2**
Doolittle I & U	September, 1996 1996–1998	51.4	35.0	**–16.4**
Dyett Middle	September, 1995 1995–1996	39.0	32.7	**–6.3**
Emmet	September, 1996 1996–1997	53.6	34.9	**–18.7**
Faraday	March, 1996 Active	62.3	53.9	**–8.4**
Fuller	March, 1996 1995–1996	63.7	47.0	**–16.7**
Goldblatt	January, 1994 1994–1995	51.6	34.4	**–17.2**
Gregory	January, 1994 1994–1996	48.9	34.9	**–14.0**
Howland	April, 1996 Active	45.9	52.2	**+6.3**
Hughes	January, 1994 1995–1996	54.5	25.7	**–28.8**
Kellman Corp.	January, 1994 1995–1996	40.7 (1995 scores)	9.5	**–31.2**
Lewis	September, 1995 Active	50.9	34.3	**–16.6**

School Achievement Structure (SAS) Percent of Students in the Bottom Quartile Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Elementary School Reading—1993/2000 (Cont.)

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Reading—1993 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Reading—2000 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Reading—Change in % of Students in Bottom Quartile 1993/2000*
Libby	September, 1995 1995–1998	63.1	48.5	**–14.6**
Mayo	January, 1994 1994–1995	46.9	29.4	**–17.5**
Mays Academy	September, 1995 1995–1996	51.6	51.6	—
McCorkle	January, 1994 1995–1996	67.7	47.9	**–19.8**
Overton	September, 1995 Active	68.8	38.7	**–30.1**
Paderewski	September, 1996 Active	48.9	48.9	—
Price	September, 1994 1994–1996	55.7	34.9	**–20.8**
Reavis	September, 1999 Active	38.4	35.0	**–3.4**
Revere	September, 2000 Active	56.4	45.3	**–11.1**
Sarbaro (Ashe)	January, 1994 1994	51.1	30.5	**–20.6**
Sexton	September, 1999 Active	55.1	33.1	**–22.0**
Sherman	September, 1996 Active	62.7	56.9	**–5.8**
Sherwood	September, 1999 Active	50.3	43.4	**–6.9**
Spalding	January, 1998 Active	80.9	34.4	**–46.5**
Spencer	January, 1994 1994–1996	58.3	38.9	**–19.4**
Thorp	September, 1996 1996–1999	56.8	39.4	**–17.4**
Tilton	September, 1995 1995–1999	60.1	46.3	**–13.8**
West Pullman	October, 1995 1995–1998	47.2	35.7	**–11.5**
Yale	September, 1999 Active	53.0	35.7	**–17.3**

Schools Removed from Academic Probation
School Achievement Structure (SAS)
DePaul University (September, 2000)

School	*SAS Start Date*	*Current SAS Status*	*Date Removed from Academic Probation*
Austin High School	September, 1995	1995–1998	September, 2000
Bethune Elementary	September, 1996	1996–2000	September, 2000
Brown Elementary	October, 1995	Active	September, 1999
Calhoun N. Elementary	April, 1996	Active	September, 1999
Calumet High School	September, 1995	1995–1997	September, 2000
Carver Primary	January, 1996	1996–1997	September, 1999
Collins High School	April, 1996	Active	September, 1999*
Crane High School	April, 1996	Active	September, 2000
Curtis Elementary	September, 1995	Active	September, 2000*
Flower High School	January, 1994	1994–1996	September, 2000
Juarez High School	January, 1994	1994–1996	September, 2000
King High School	August, 1997	Active	September, 2000
Lewis Elementary	September, 1995	Active	September, 1998
McCorkle Elementary	January, 1994	1994	September, 1998
Near North High School	January, 1995	1995–1999	September, 2000
Overton Elementary	September, 1995	Active	September, 1998*
Thorp Elementary	September, 1996	1996–1999	September, 1998
Tilton Elementary	September, 1995	1995–1999	September, 1998
Westinghouse High School	September, 1995	Active	September, 2000
West Pullman	October, 1995	1995–1998	September, 1998*

* Probation status reinstated September, 2000.

MATHEMATICS

Elementary School Reports

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) 1993–2000

High School Reports

Test of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) 1994–2000

Change in Percent of Students Above National Norms
Change in Percent of Students in Bottom Quartile

Elementary Schools

Bethune
Brown
Calhoun North
Carver Primary
Clark Middle
Crane Elementary
Curtis
Dodge
Doolittle I & U
Dyett
Emmet
Faraday
Fuller
Goldblatt
Gregory
Howland
Hughes
Kellman
Lewis
Libby
Mayo
Mays Academy
McCorkle
Overton
Paderewski
Price
Reavis
Revere
Sarbaro (Ashe)
Sexton
Sherman
Sherwood
Spalding Elementary
Spencer
Thorp
Tilton
West Pullman
Yale

High Schools

Austin
Calumet
Collins
Crane
Englewood
Flower
Juarez
King
Near North
Phillips
Spalding
Tilden
Westinghouse

School Achievement Structure (SAS)
Percent of Students at or Above National Norms
Measured by the Test of Achievement and Proficiency
High School Mathematics—1994/2000

High School	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Mathematics—1994 % at or above National Norms*	*Mathematics—2000 % at or above National Norms*	*Mathematics Growth 1994/2000 (percent)*
Austin	September, 1995 1995–1998	3.4	23.7	**+20.3**
Calumet	September, 1995 1995–1997	2.8	21.5	**+18.7**
Collins	April, 1996 Active	5.4	27.0	**+21.6**
Crane	April, 1996 Active	5.1	32.2	**+27.1**
Englewood	September, 1997 Active	4.2	19.0	**+14.8**
Flower	January, 1994 1994–1996	1.9	19.0	**+17.1**
Juarez	January, 1994 1994–1996	13.1	38.0	**+24.9**
King	August, 1997 Active	2.7	29.6	**+26.9**
Near North*	September, 1995 1995–1999	2.0	6.7	**+4.7**
Phillips	January, 1994 1994–1997	4.2	25.9	**+21.7**
Spalding	September, 1998 Active	3.1	29.4	**+26.3**
Tilden	May, 1994 Active	4.7	27.0	**+22.3**
Westinghouse	September, 1995 Active	8.5	55.1	**+46.6**

* Near North test data based on only 15 students due to the fact that school is in process of closing.

School Achievement Structure (SAS)
Percent of Students in the Bottom Quartile
Measured by the Test of Achievement and Proficiency
High School Mathematics—1994/2000

High School	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Mathematics—1994 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Mathematics—2000 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Mathematics—Change in % of Students in Bottom Quartile 1994/2000*
Austin	September, 1995 1995–1998	80.1	47.4	**–32.7**
Calumet	September, 1995 1995–1997	78.6	40.7	**–37.9**
Collins	April, 1996 Active	73.5	43.2	**–30.3**
Crane	April, 1996 Active	80.3	32.5	**–47.8**
Englewood	September, 1997 Active	85.2	48.6	**–36.6**
Flower	January, 1994 1994–1996	81.3	45.7	**–35.6**
Juarez	January, 1994 1994–1996	58.7	30.4	**–28.3**
King	August, 1997 Active	79.3	51.9	**–27.4**
Near North*	September, 1995 1995–1999	77.9	66.7	**–11.2**
Phillips	January, 1994 1994–1997	79.4	47.2	**–32.2**
Spalding	September, 1998 Active	76.0	26.5	**–49.5**
Tilden	May, 1994 Active	77.1	37.0	**–40.1**
Westinghouse	September, 1995 Active	62.7	13.5	**–49.2**

* Near North test data based on only 15 students due to the fact that school is in process of closing.

School Achievement Structure (SAS) Percent of Students at or Above National Norms Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Elementary School Mathematics—1993/2000

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Mathematics— 1993 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Mathematics— 2000 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Mathematics— Change in % of Students at or Above National Norms 1993/2000*
Bethune	September, 1996 1996–2000	11.2	21.2	**+10.0**
Brown	October, 1995 Active	16.0	31.3	**+15.3**
Calhoun North	April, 1996 Active	15.0	28.5	**+13.5**
Carver Primary	January, 1996 1996–1997	37.8	71.4	**+33.6**
Clark Middle	September, 1994 Active	12.3	25.5	**+13.2**
Crane Elementary	April, 1996 Active	19.7 (1996 scores)	39.3	**+19.6**
Curtis	September, 1995 Active	15.9	39.5	**+23.6**
Dodge	April, 1996 Active	15.5	23.1	**+7.6**
Doolittle I & U	September, 1996 1996–1998	13.0	26.7	**+23.7**
Dyett Middle	September, 1995 1995–1996	19.5	33.8	**+14.3**
Emmet	September, 1996 1996–1997	15.8	39.1	**+23.3**
Faraday	March, 1996 Active	11.2	26.4	**+15.2**
Fuller	March, 1996 1995–1996	17.9	41.0	**+23.1**
Goldblatt	January, 1994 1994–1995	21.9	36.5	**+14.6**
Gregory	January, 1994 1994–1996	21.5	33.5	**+12.0**
Howland	April, 1996 Active	15.8	23.6	**+7.8**
Hughes	January, 1994 1995–1996	21.0	54.5	**+33.5**
Kellman Corp.	January, 1994 1995–1996	39.5 (1995 scores)	74.1	**+34.6**
Lewis	September, 1995 Active	18.4	35.1	**+16.7**

School Achievement Structure (SAS)
Percent of Students at or Above National Norms
Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
Elementary School Mathematics—1993/2000 (Cont.)

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Mathematics—1993 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Mathematics—2000 % of Students at or Above National Norms*	*Mathematics—Change in % of Students at or Above National Norms 1993/2000*
Libby	September, 1995 1995–1998	11.0	28.1	**+17.1**
Mayo	January, 1994 1994–1995	16.4	63.9	**+47.5**
Mays Academy	September, 1995 1995–1996	28.6	52.7	**+24.1**
McCorkle	January, 1994 1995–1996	6.5	39.6	**+33.1**
Overton	September, 1995 Active	7.6	48.1	**+40.5**
Paderewski	September, 1996 Active	17.3	20.9	**+3.6**
Price	September, 1994 1994–1996	18.0	28.8	**+10.8**
Reavis	September, 1999 Active	20.3	32.4	**+12.1**
Revere	September, 2000 Active	12.1	37.1	**+25.0**
Sarbaro (Ashe)	January, 1994 1994	18.2	42.1	**+23.9**
Sexton	September, 1999 Active	15.4	31.0	**+15.6**
Sherman	September, 1996 Active	12.2	22.8	**+10.6**
Sherwood	September, 1999 Active	23.2	32.6	**+9.4**
Spalding	January, 1998 Active	4.7	43.8	**+39.1**
Spencer	January, 1994 1994–1996	8.5	40.2	**+31.7**
Thorp	September, 1996 1996–1999	20.0	34.3	**+14.3**
Tilton	September, 1995 1995–1999	21.0	28.5	**+7.5**
West Pullman	October, 1995 1995–1998	17.6	35.4	**+17.8**
Yale	September, 1999 Active	14.7	36.6	**+21.9**

School Achievement Structure (SAS)
Percent of Students in the Bottom Quartile
Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
Elementary School Mathematics—1993/2000

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Mathematics—1993 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Mathematics—2000 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Mathematics—Change in % of Students in Bottom Quartile 1993/2000*
Bethune	September, 1996 1996–2000	61.0	55.2	**–5.8**
Brown	October, 1995 Active	53.1	31.3	**–21.8**
Calhoun North	April, 1996 Active	59.9	40.1	**–19.8**
Carver Primary	January, 1996 1996–1997	30.4	15.0	**–15.4**
Clark Middle	September, 1994 Active	54.7	38.9	**–15.8**
Crane Elementary	April, 1996 Active	44.3 (1996 scores)	13.5	**–30.8**
Curtis	September, 1995 Active	55.9	34.8	**–21.1**
Dodge	April, 1996 Active	60.4	46.3	**–14.1**
Doolittle I & U	September, 1996 1996–1998	61.8	28.9	**–32.9**
Dyett Middle	September, 1995 1995–1996	45.6	26.9	**–18.7**
Emmet	September, 1996 1996–1997	57.3	24.8	**–32.5**
Faraday	March, 1996 Active	70.7	39.3	**–31.4**
Fuller	March, 1996 1995–1996	55.4	26.8	**–28.6**
Goldblatt	January, 1994 1994–1995	52.5	28.3	**–24.2**
Gregory	January, 1994 1994–1996	53.0	38.2	**–14.8**
Howland	April, 1996 Active	57.2	38.2	**–19.0**
Hughes	January, 1994 1995–1996	49.8	16.5	**–33.3**
Kellman Corp.	January, 1994 1995–1996	34.6 (1995 scores)	6.1	**–28.5**
Lewis	September, 1995 Active	48.5	32.4	**–16.1**

School Achievement Structure (SAS)
Percent of Students in the Bottom Quartile
Measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
Elementary School Mathematics—1993/2000 (Cont.)

Elementary	*SAS Start Date Service Dates/ Current Status*	*Mathematics—1993 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Mathematics—2000 % of Students in Bottom Quartile*	*Mathematics—Change in % of Students in Bottom Quartile 1993/2000*
Libby	September, 1995 1995–1998	67.7	39.6	**–28.1**
Mayo	January, 1994 1994–1995	54.7	12.3	**–42.4**
Mays Academy	September, 1995 1995–1996	46.7	29.7	**–17.0**
McCorkle	January, 1994 1995–1996	72.8	28.5	**–44.3**
Overton	September, 1995 Active	75.0	23.9	**–51.1**
Paderewski	September, 1996 Active	62.3	42.4	**–19.9**
Price	September, 1994 1994–1996	56.8	34.7	**–22.1**
Reavis	September, 1999 Active	49.8	35.8	**–14.0**
Revere	September, 2000 Active	63.9	34.2	**–29.7**
Sarbaro (Ashe)	January, 1994 1994	54.4	28.3	**–26.1**
Sexton	September, 1999 Active	61.5	31.0	**–30.5**
Sherman	September, 1996 Active	65.6	48.9	**–16.7**
Sherwood	September, 1999 Active	51.6	38.3	**–13.3**
Spalding	January, 1998 Active	89.1	25.0	**–64.1**
Spencer	January, 1994 1994–1996	68.6	30.1	**–38.5**
Thorp	September, 1996 1996–1999	47.9	29.8	**–18.1**
Tilton	September, 1995 1995–1999	59.5	36.6	**–22.9**
West Pullman	October, 1995 1995–1998	44.9	33.1	**–11.8**
Yale	September, 1999 Active	59.5	28.9	**–30.6**

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CHAPTER 14

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

Trends in Identification with Academics among Minority Students from 1972–1992

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INTRODUCTION

Educational and psychological research has repeatedly shown that students from disadvantaged minority groups tend to underperform in the academic realm relative to White or Asian students. Relative to White students, African American students tend to receive lower grades in school (e.g., Demo & Parker, 1987; Simmons, Brown, Bush, & Blyth, 1978); score lower on standardized tests of intellectual ability (e.g., Bachman, 1970; Herring, 1989; Reyes & Stanic, 1988; Simmons et al., 1978), drop out at higher rates (e.g., American Council on Education, 1990; Steele, 1992), and even graduate from college with lower GPAs (e.g., Nettles, 1988). There are similar findings in the literature for Latino students (e.g., Bruschi & Anderson, 1994; Whitworth & Barrientos, 1990). Furthermore, when students are paired on academic preparedness, subsequent achievement is lower for minority students than White or Asian students (Jensen, 1980; Ramist,

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Lewis, & McCamley-Jenkins, 1994). In sum, there is convincing evidence that students from disadvantaged minority groups receive poorer outcomes at every level, even given equal preparation, than that of White and Asian students (Steele, 1997).

There are numerous explanations for this trend, including differences in cognitive style (e.g., Shade, 1982), aversion to intellectual competition (Howard & Hammond, 1985), communication styles (e.g., Kochman, 1981), genetics (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994), low achievement motivation, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and feelings of helplessness (e.g., Epps, 1970), and the social psychological environment (e.g., Katz, Epps, & Alexson, 1964; Steele, 1997). However, many of these theories tend not to be very satisfying. For example, if cultural differences are the culprit, why do children who emigrate from cultures drastically different from ours (e.g., Middle Eastern countries, Asian countries) often do better than students of color born in America? Why do African immigrants (children not born into the majority White culture) do better in school than African-descended children born into the majority White culture? It is questions such as these that tend to make genetics and lingual/cultural theories unsatisfying. Other observations also raise interesting questions. For example, the racial achievement gap is neither developmentally nor historically static. Neisser (1998) argues that the historic racial gap in intelligence and academic test scores is decreasing. Furthermore, the gap between White and minority students, minimal or nonexistent at the beginning of schooling, widens by as much as two grade levels by sixth grade (e.g., Alexander & Entwhistle, 1988; Valencia, 1991, 1997).

Recently, the concept of identification with academics has emerged as one factor contributing to the racial achievement gap. Several authors, including Claude Steele, John Ogbu, and Richard Majors, have argued that factors in society prevent students of color from viewing themselves as scholars and students, valuing academics personally. Empirical evidence (e.g., Osborne 1995, 1997b) supports this argument. Theoretically, this lack of identification with academics can cause or contribute to poorer performance than a student that is highly identified (Osborne, 1997a, 1997b; Osborne & Rausch, 2001).

The goal of this chapter is to extend our understanding of the racial achievement gap, and particularly historical changes in the achievement gap, by exploring historical trends in identification with academics. Theoretically, if Neisser (1998) is correct, and we are seeing a real closing of the achievement gap, one might expect a trend toward improving identification with academics among students of color. Furthermore, our society, over the last half-century, has embarked upon several massive, ambitious interventions designed to improve schooling for disadvantaged students, particularly students of color (such as desegregation efforts and the move toward a multicultural, or at least less racist, curriculum), one might similarly expect changes in identification with academics as a result of these massive interventions.

Identification with Academics

The concept of identification with academics is rooted in the Symbolic Interactionist perspective on self-esteem, although many self-esteem theories acknowledge the concept. Throughout the history of Self theory, from William James (1890/1963), through Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934), and on to the present, the Symbolic Interactionist view of the self posits that people receive feedback from their environment, that this feedback, if attended to, is perceived, if deemed accurate or valid, is incorporated into the self-concept, and if that facet of the self-concept is viewed as central, or important (and thus, an individual is *identified* with that domain), then the changes in the self-concept will affect an individual's self-esteem. If an individual does not value that domain, does not view that domain as important to the self (and thus is considered not identified, or disidentified, with that domain), then feedback in that domain will ultimately have little effect on that individual's self-esteem. As the focus on this chapter is identification with academics, an individual who values academics, who views academic performance as an important dimension on which the self is evaluated, is considered identified with academics. If, on the other hand, an individual does not value academics as a dimension on which to evaluate the self, that person would be considered not identified with academics, or disidentified. Note that the Symbolic Interactionist perspective is not the only self-esteem theory that posits academics as a source of self-esteem (for a more thorough discussion of this point, see Osborne, 1995). Nor is this perspective the only perspective that includes the notion that different areas of life can have different levels of relevance to the self (see, e.g., Pelham & Swann, 1989; Rosenberg, 1979; Tesser, 1988).

Another important feature of many self theories is that the relevance of a domain not only varies across individuals but within individuals over time. Individuals seem to be extremely facile in their ability to alter which domains they perceive as central in order to maintain a certain positivity of self-esteem. Several authors have argued that individuals are particularly likely to selectively devalue domains for which their group, or they personally, fare poorly and selectively value domains for which their group, or they personally, fare relatively well (e.g., Crocker & Major, 1989; Major & Schmader, 1998; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Tesser, 1988; Tesser & Campbell, 1980).

Note that most research, and much of the discussion in this area, examines this proposition in terms of some outcome influencing the centrality of a domain. However, it is theoretically consistent to argue that the centrality of a domain can also influence performance in that domain (it is likely that both processes operate circularly and iteratively). In fact, authors such as Newmann (1981) and Finn (1989) have argued that identification with academics is a necessary condition for learning. Students who are identified with academics, for example, should be more motivated to succeed and persist longer in the face of failure, because their self-esteem is more strongly influenced by academic performance. For identified students, good performance should be intrinsically rewarding (higher self-esteem) and poor performance should be aversive (lower self-esteem). In contrast, disidentified students should experience lower motivation to succeed in academics because there is little contingency between academic outcomes and self-esteem—good performance is not intrinsically rewarding, and poor performance is not intrinsically punishing, leaving those who have disidentified with little intrinsic incentive to expend effort in academic endeavors. These individuals may therefore be at higher risk for academic problems, especially poor grades and dropping out. There is growing evidence for this point. Identification has been shown to prospectively predict important academic outcomes, such as grades (Osborne, 1997a; Osborne & Rausch, 2001), being placed on academic probation and dismissal for academic cause, being placed on the honor roll or Dean's list (Osborne, 1997a), behavioral referrals, and absenteeism (Osborne & Rausch, 2001). Furthermore, important psychological variables have been shown to be related to identification, such as learning goals, intrinsic valuing of academics, self-regulation, mastery orientation, academic competitiveness, and cognitive processing of course material (Osborne & Rausch, 2001). Other research has shown that identification with other domains (e.g., identification with work) is predictive of performance in that domain (e.g., Kanungo, 1979).

In sum, there is evidence that identification with academics is related to important academic outcomes, probably through variables such as motivation and persistence, among others.

Why Do Students Disidentify?

There are many theorists writing about race and educational achievement. From many of these writings we can infer that students of color should be less strongly identified with academics than White students. Claude Steele's (e.g., 1992, 1997) theory of stereotype threat identifies negative stereotypes as problems for students of color. Steele argues that while all students experience anxiety in school situations (such as concern over appearing foolish for giving a wrong answer), students who are members of minority groups for which there are negative group stereotypes concerning academic ability (e.g., African Americans, girls and women in math and sciences) suffer from additional anxiety because for these individuals a wrong answer is not only personally damaging, but also confirms the negative group stereotype. This increased anxiety is aversive, and as a self-protective measure, students devalue (reduce identification with) academics. This serves to reduce stereotype-induced anxiety, as the student is no longer concerned with evaluation in that domain (see, e.g., Epps, 1970; Katz & Greenbaum, 1963),

Furthermore, it is not necessary for the individual student to believe the negative group stereotype. While research such as that by Devine (1989) suggests that all members of a society are indoctrinated with the stereotypes that are part of the culture, not everyone believes them or acts on them. In the case of stereotype threat, it appears to be sufficient that the individual is aware that there is a stereotype that calls their intellectual or academic competency into question. Compelling experimental evidence presented by Steele and Aronson (1995) demonstrated in a sample of Stanford undergraduates that (a) African American students score significantly lower on a test of intellectual ability than Whites when the test is perceived as diagnostic of their ability (thus triggering the stereotype threat); (b) when this stereotype threat is reduced by portraying the test as not diagnostic of intelligence the two groups did equally well; and (c) that even when the test was considered not diagnostic the mere salience of race served to inhibit performance. Osborne (2000) has found support for Steele's assertion that it is socially induced anxiety that explains these performance differences (for a summary of other similar studies, see Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998). Thus, Steele and colleagues have demonstrated that the mere salience of race and the presence of a negative group stereotype is enough to significantly impair performance, that performance impairment is situationally specific (not permanent or trait-like), and that anxiety or evaluation apprehension appears to be the mediating variable. Furthermore, repeated negative outcomes or punishments in a domain (both of which were shown to be present in these studies, in the form of relatively poor academic performance and anxiety or evaluation apprehension) has been postulated to cause disidentification (Crocker & Major, 1989; Major & Schmader, 1998; Steele, 1997).

Ogbu (e.g., 1992) explained disidentification more in terms of the social status of the racial groups. He argued that African Americans, as well as Native Americans and some Latino groups, could be categorized as *involuntary minorities*, groups that did not come to the country or into the society of their own free will. In contrast to *voluntary minorities*, who have immigrated or joined the culture of their own free will and in order to improve their conditions (e.g., Irish, Thai, Cuban immigrants, and recent African immigrants), those groups who were conquered or subsumed (e.g., Native Americans, Inuit, Puerto Ricans) or brought as slaves (African Americans) have a very different view of the educational system. He argued that involuntary minority groups view the educational system as representative of White culture, the culture that conquered and subordinated them. In response to this, and their caste-like status in the society, Ogbu argues that these groups develop *secondary cultural differences* (also referred to as an oppositional culture). These differences include cognitive style, communication style, interaction style, and learning style (Ogbu, 1992). Moreover, unlike voluntary minorities, involuntary minorities celebrate these differences as part of their group identity. As a corollary of embracing these differences, members of these groups tend to shun behaviors that are identified with the dominant culture (e.g., academic success; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

According to this view, disadvantaged minority students who are members of involuntary minorities face a tough choice: either maintain secondary cultural differences and devalue academics, or succeed in school, value academics, but risk being an outcast within the peer group or community. Thus, according to this view, devaluing develops due to cultural influences, a need for positive group identity, and is enforced via peer and community pressure to not "act White."

Ogbu and colleagues have assembled an impressive amount of evidence supporting this theory. Perhaps most compelling are the cross-cultural studies (summarized in Ogbu, 1992, and elsewhere) showing that this phenomenon is not unique to America but occurs around the world where there is a similar relationship between dominant and subjugated groups in a culture. Ogbu and others have also noted that when a group moves out of the culture where they are viewed as caste-like, or subordinated, and move to another country or culture where they are not viewed in this fashion, the academic disparities tend to disappear. For example, Ogbu (1992) cites the case of the Baraku and Koreans in Japan, both caste-like minority groups. In Japan, Baraku and Korean students do relatively poorly when compared to Ippan students (the dominant group). However, when these groups move to Hawaii, the United States, or other countries where they are not in a caste-like status, their academic performance ceases to be impaired.

Ogbu's oppositional perspective is echoed by other authors, including Majors and Billson (1992), who argue that African American males adopt a "cool pose," or a ritualized form of masculinity that enhances coping and survival in an environment of social oppression and racism. According to Majors and Billson, cool pose allows the African American male to survive by projecting a front of emotionlessness, fearlessness, and aloofness that counters inner pain from damaged pride, poor self-confidence, and fragile social competence that comes from existing as a member of a subjugated group. Unfortunately, as with Steele's notion, cool pose depicts African American males as victims of their coping strategies. In terms of education, cool pose often leads to flamboyant and nonconformist behavior that often elicits punishment in school settings. Equally unfortunately, the development of a "cool" self-concept appears to be incompatible with a hard-driving, motivated student that strongly values academics. Thus, African American boys, according to this perspective, adopt a strategy for coping with group membership that appears to be incompatible with identification with academics.

From the writings of Steele, Crocker and Major, Ogbu and Fordham, and Majors and Billson (among others), we can propose that members of certain minority groups fail to thrive in school because of psychological and cultural hurdles. They are less able to incorporate schooling and education into their self-view due to (a) psychological mechanisms that protect them from anxiety, evaluation apprehension, and adverse outcomes; (b) having to give up their identification with their minority group and identifying with "White" pursuits and values; (c) peer group resistance to valuing education and rejection of those who do; or (d) psychological reactance that manifests as heightened or ritualized masculinity, which also prevents the individual from succeeding in academics. Whatever the posited cause and/or mechanism, the final outcome appears to be selective devaluing of academics and education.

Most self theories allow the relative importance of individual domains to vary, both across individuals and within individuals, over time. For example, several authors have argued that individuals are particularly likely to selectively devalue domains for which their group, or they personally, fare poorly and selectively value domains for which their group, or they personally, fare relatively well (e.g., Crocker & Major, 1989; Major & Schmader, 1998; Tesser, 1988). Studies have shown that individuals tend to value those domains in which they fare well (Taylor & Brown, 1988), selectively devalue domains in response to relatively poor performance (Tesser & Campbell, 1980), and report heightened negative affect following poor performance on a valued dimension compared to a devalued dimension (Tesser, Millar, & Moore, 1988; for a more thorough discussion, see Major & Schmader, 1998). Additionally, Rosenberg (e.g., 1979) has argued that an individual's valuing of domains is heavily influenced not only by group factors but also by society/culture in general, as well as the specific system of rewards and punishments that an individual experiences. Most agree, however, that whatever valuing system is arrived at by the individual tends to be the most beneficial to maintaining and enhancing positive self-view.

Consistent with the theoretical perspectives above, there is strong empirical evidence that students belonging to disadvantaged minority groups, and African American boys in particular, disidentify with academics. Theoretically, identified students' self-esteem is more strongly correlated with academic outcomes than disidentified students. Many studies have reported lower correlations between academic achievement and self-esteem among African Americans (e.g., Demo & Parker, 1987; Lay & Wakstein, 1985; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1972; see also Osborne, Major, & Crocker, 1992). In one particularly interesting study, Hare (1977) found that African American elementary school students based their global self-esteem not on schooling but primarily on family and home, whereas White students base theirs primarily on school and to a lesser extent on family and peer interactions. Osborne (1995, 1997b) has shown that disidentification is a developmental trend, most evident in students of color after eighth grade, particularly African American boys.

In sum, the writings of Steele, Crocker and Major, Ogbu (and Fordham), and Majors and Billson all arrive at similar conclusions: members of certain disadvantaged minority groups fail to thrive in school because of psychological and cultural hurdles. They are less able to incorporate schooling and education into their self-view due to (a) psychological mechanisms that protect them from anxiety, evaluation apprehension, and adverse outcomes; (b) having to give up their identification with their minority group and identifying with "White" pursuits and values; (c) peer group resistance to valuing education and rejection of those who do; or (d) psychological reactance that manifests as heightened or ritualized masculinity, which also prevents the individual from succeeding in academics. Whatever the posited cause and/or mechanism, the final outcome appears to be disidentification.

Identification with Academics in Perspective: Changes from 1972 to 1992

While there is evidence that disidentification is an issue for students of color, and evidence that this disidentification might contribute to the racial achievement gap, there has been little discussion as to whether the situation is improving or degrading. Identification should be responsive to changes in the social psychological environment. Thus, if the negative stereotypes regarding the intellectual ability of students of color changed, then Steele might predict more identification with academics among these students. Both Ogbu and Majors and Billson posit social psychological factors in the psychological rejection of academics as a valued part of the self. And other social psychologists, such as Crocker and Major, would agree that when a group's feedback becomes less negative, then disidentification becomes less necessary to protect the self.

Indeed, many of the writings of these authors, particularly Steele, Ogbu, and Majors and Billson, recommend changes such as (a) implementation of a true multicultural curriculum (for an analysis of multicultural curriculum efforts, see Grant & Sleeter, 1985); (b) promoting a conceptualization of intelligence as malleable, expandable, and responsive to intervention rather than fixed and predetermined or traitlike; (c) providing role models to minority youth; and (d) involving the community in promoting education and monitoring the progress of community members (applying community pressure) (for a more thorough discussion of recommendations arising from these writings, see Osborne, 2001). Many of these recommendations have recently become more evident in the educational system. In addition, there have been many societal changes in the last half-century that may help reduce disidentification, such as the presence of more minority individuals in the media and less *overt* repression and derogation of persons of color.

Taken together, the last half-century of societal and educational reforms may have served to allow students of color to be more strongly identified with academics than their predecessors. Indeed, if one believes Neisser's (1998) arguments, we may be seeing real decreases in the racial achievement gap, which might be an effect of increased identification, or a precursor. Thus, the goal of this study is to examine trends in identification with academics among high school seniors in 1972, 1982, and 1992, the only years for which this sort of data are available.

METHODS

Three existing National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data sets were utilized to examine this issue: the National Longitudinal Survey of 1972 (NLS72), High School and Beyond of 1980 (HS&B), and the National Education Longitudinal Survey of 1988 (NELS). All three data sets were large longitudinal surveys of secondary school students, and were constructed using many parallel items. These data sets provide data on high school seniors from 1972 (NLS72), 1982 (HS&B), and 1992 (NELS). For all three samples, appropriate weights (provided by NCES and scaled to maintain original sample size) were applied to create a nationally representative sample (for a more detailed description of this weighting, and the rationale behind it, see Osborne, 1995). Table 14.1 provides detailed information on the three samples.

Table 14.1. Overview of Sample Sizes by Race, Sex, and Year

Group	*1972 Seniors (NLS72)*	*1982 Seniors (HS&B)*	*1992 Seniors (NELS)*	*Total*
Males				
African American	607	1666	1319	3592
Native American	90	207	122	419
Latino	277	1968	1074	3319
Asian/Pacific Islander	76	186	388	650
White	6983	9992	6778	23753
Females				
African American	800	1841	1287	3928
Native American	82	145	127	354
Latino	282	1617	1107	3006
Asian/Pacific Islander	76	177	347	600
White	6866	10236	6540	23642
TOTAL	16683	28117	19220	63263

Note: Only subjects with data present at senior year and present on race and sex variables were retained in the data set.

Variables

Student grades. For the NLS72 and HS&B data sets, student grades were collected via a single item asking the student to report their grades from high school. Grades for students from the NELS data set were collected separately for math, science, English, and social studies (which were averaged to form a composite score equivalent to the previous data sets). In all cases, students reported their grades on a scale ranging from mostly As (1) to below D (8). The scores were reversed so that higher numbers reflected better academic performance. Finally, all scores were standardized by converting to z-scores, allowing cross-sample comparisons. Table 14.2 summarizes grades as a function of race and sex. Internal consistency estimates (for the NELS only) for this variable was $\alpha = .94$.

Global self-esteem. Four items from the Rosenberg Self-View Inventory (Rosenberg, 1965) were included in all three samples: "I take a positive attitude toward myself," "I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others," "I am able to do things as well as most people," and "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself." The items were measured on a scale ranging from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (4). Items were reversed so higher scores indicate higher self-esteem, averaged to form a composite, and standardized (converted to z-scores) to allow comparisons across data sets. Internal consistency estimates for the scales were $\alpha = .68$, .73, and .82 for the NLS72, HS&B, and NELS, respectively. See Table 14.3.

Table 14.2. Overview of Grades Variable

Group	*1972 Seniors*	*1982 Seniors*	*1992 Seniors*
Boys			
African American	–0.61 (0.88)	–0.44 (0.92)	–0.66 (0.80)
Native American	–0.64 (1.13)	–0.31 (0.99)	–0.71 (0.70)
Latino	–0.52 (0.96)	–0.51 (0.94)	–0.40 (0.92)
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.22 (0.94)	0.05 (1.12)	0.35 (0.94)
White	–0.15 (0.99)	–0.07 (1.00)	–0.05 (1.00)
Girls			
African American	–0.18 (0.92)	–0.13 (0.91)	–0.38 (0.93)
Native American	–0.42 (0.71)	–0.06 (0.99)	–0.38 (0.83)
Latina	–0.13 (0.92)	–0.14 (0.94)	–0.24 (0.88)
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.45 (0.92)	0.40 (1.01)	0.56 (0.92)
White	0.26 (0.95)	0.31 (0.94)	0.28 (0.95)

Note: This variable was standardized via z-scoring within each sample cohort for comparability across samples. Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

Table 14.3. Overview of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Composites

Group	*1972 Seniors*	*1982 Seniors*	*1992 Seniors*
Boys			
African American	0.19 (0.96)	0.16 (1.20)	0.31 (0.93)
Native American	0.06 (1.02)	0.13 (1.11)	0.04 (0.97)
Latino	0.19 (0.89)	0.09 (1.16)	0.17 (0.97)
Asian/Pacific Islander	–0.21 (0.99)	0.09 (0.97)	0.00 (1.08)
White	0.05 (0.96)	0.02 (0.99)	0.08 (0.97)
Girls			
African American	0.18 (1.00)	0.08 (1.12)	0.16 (1.00)
Native American	–0.27 (1.08)	0.09 (1.19)	–0.33 (1.12)
Latina	0.06 (0.79)	0.04 (1.02)	–0.07 (1.05)
Asian/Pacific Islander	–0.29 (1.02)	0.14 (0.94)	–0.23 (1.02)
White	–0.07 (0.71)	–0.10 (0.91)	–0.15 (1.00)

Note: This variable was standardized via z-scoring within each sample cohort for comparability across samples. Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

Engagement was assessed via participation in school-based extracurricular activities. In all three databases students were asked to report whether they participate in the following extracurricular activities: athletics, cheerleading, debating, music, hobby clubs, honor clubs, newspaper or yearbook, subject clubs (e.g., math club), student government, or vocational education clubs (e.g., Future Farmers of America). Participation is represented by the total number of school-based extracurricular activities in which a student participates.

Demographic variables such as student race and sex were also gathered from the samples.

Procedure for Assessing Identification with Academics

Following the theory discussed above, if an individual is identified with academics there should be stronger correspondence between academic outcomes and self-esteem than if the individual has disidentified. Thus, although there are no direct measures of identification, one can assess identification with academics as the correlation between academic outcomes and self-esteem (as in Osborne, 1995, 1997b; Osborne & Rausch, 2001) with stronger correlations indicating higher identification. While this is not ideal, it is theoretically consistent with the discussion presented above, and self-esteem theory in general. Note that, due to modest reliability issues with the self-esteem variable (due to only four items being used), all correlations were corrected for attenuation, as described by Cohen and Cohen (1983).

Because certain behaviors, called engagement behaviors (e.g., Finn & Rock, 1997), should be indicative of identification with academics, a measure of engagement, participation in school-based extracurricular activities, will also be examined as evidence for changes in identification with academics.

RESULTS

Changes in Correlations between Grades and Self-Esteem from 1972 to 1992

To assess identification with academics for the various groups of students, correlations between grades and self-esteem were computed separately for each group. Correlations were tested for significant differences, as outlined in Cohen and Cohen (1983). A summary of the analyses for high school seniors is presented in Table 14.4 and Figures 14.1 and 14.2.

Table 14.4. High School Seniors' Correlations between Grades and Self-Esteem, 1972–1992

Group	*1972*	*1982*	*1992*
Boys			
African American	$.23_a^{***}$ (320)	$.09_b^{**}$ (999)	$-.05_c$ (890)
Native American	$.30_a^{*}$ (47)	$-.15_b^{\#}$ (126)	$.04_{ab}$ (61)
Latino	$.45_a^{***}$ (210)	$.16_b^{***}$ (1298)	$.14_b^{***}$ (776)
Asian/Pacific Islander	$.18_a$ (44)	$.19_a^{*}$ (132)	$.23_a^{***}$ (369)
White	$.20_a^{***}$ (4835)	$.20_a^{***}$ (7766)	$.18_a^{***}$ (6966)
Girls			
African American	$.12_a^{**}$ (515)	$.21a^{***}$ (1275)	$.17_a^{***}$ (975)
Native American	$.23_a$ (43)	$.33_a^{**}$ (93)	$.29_a^{**}$ (93)
Latina	$.22_{ab}^{**}$ (198)	$.19_a^{***}$ (1145)	$.27_b^{***}$ (815)
Asian/Pacific Islander	$-.10_a$ (198)	$.22_b^{**}$ (136)	$.14_b^{**}$ (356)
White	$.24_a^{***}$ (4947)	$.17_b^{***}$ (8506)	$.22_a^{***}$ (6614)

Note: Cell size is included in parentheses. Correlations with different subscripts within rows differ at $p < .05$. # $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, two-tailed.

As seen in Table 14.4, boys of color showed a historical trend toward decreasing identification with academics, while White and Asian/Pacific Islander students did not show a significant change. Specifically, over the 20-year period studied, African American boys' identification with academics decreased significantly, from $r = .23$ in 1972 to $r = -.05$ in 1992. Native American boys showed a significant drop from 1972 to 1982 (from $r = .30$ to $r = -15$), with a nonsignificant moderating trend toward 1992. Also, Latino boys showed a significant decrease from $r = .45$ in 1972 to $r = .14$ in 1992.

Girls of color showed trends toward increasing identification over the time period, although only Latina and Asian girls showed a significant difference. White girls, as with White boys, showed no significant overall change over the observed time period.

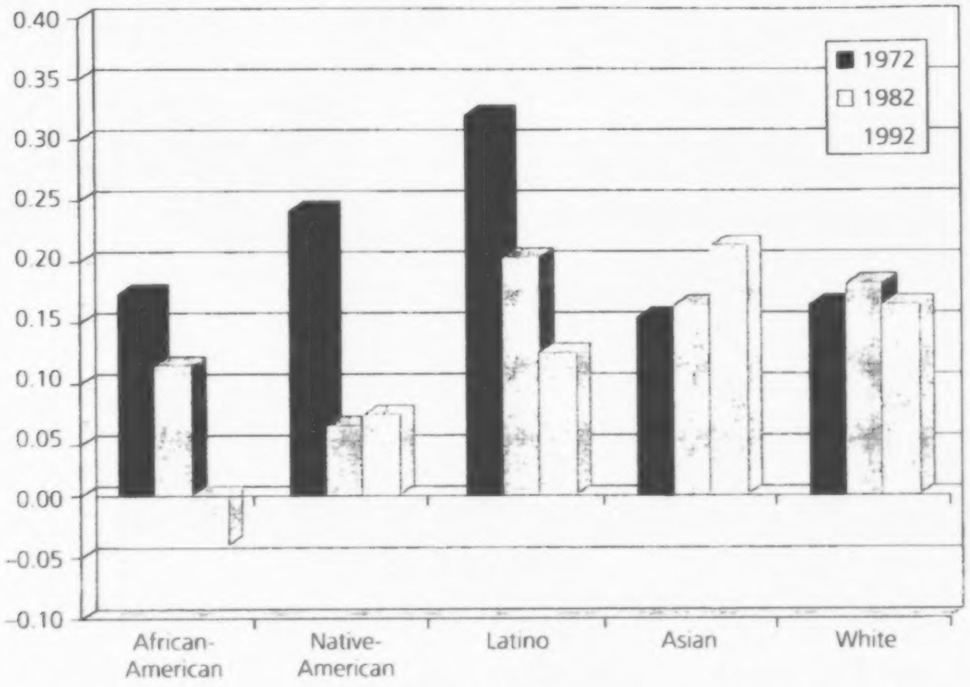

Figure 14.1. Identification with academics among boys, 1972–1992.

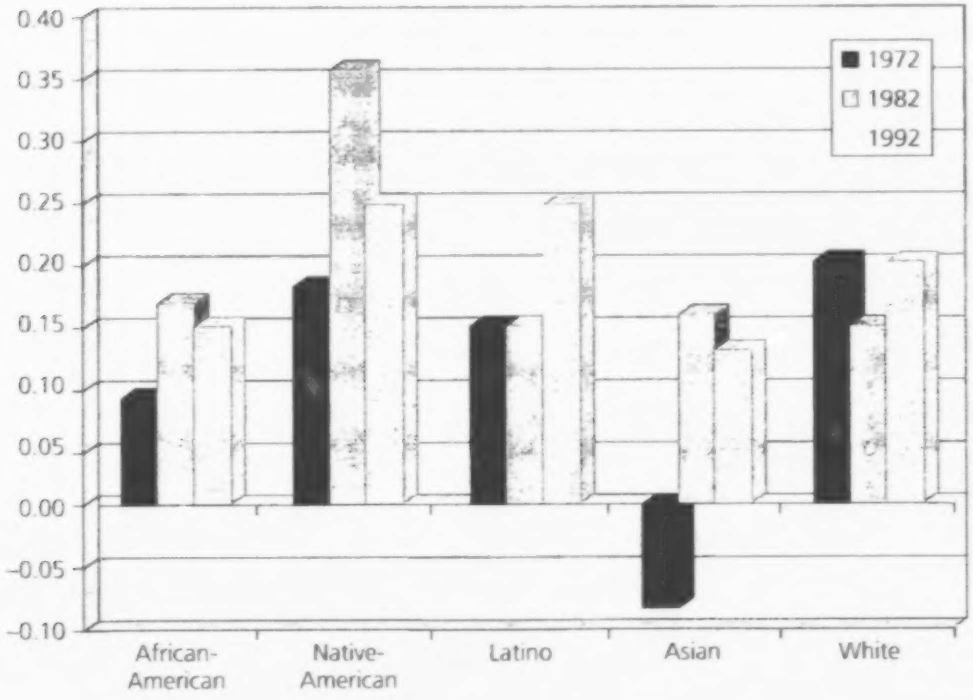

Figure 14.2. Identification with academics among girls, 1972–1992.

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These results indicate that boys of color were less likely to be identified with academics in 1992 than in 1972, a troubling trend. Conversely, girls of color in 1992 are more likely to be identified with academics than their counterparts from 1972.

Participation in extracurricular activities. Participation was analyzed via a 3 (year) × 5 (race) × 2 (sex) analysis of variance. The results of this analysis revealed significant effects for race, sex, year cohort, the interaction of race and sex, the interaction of race and year cohort, and the three-way interaction.

Overall, African American, Native American, and Latino students had the highest levels of participation, with Whites lower and Asian students lowest ($F(4,58222) = 42.03$, $p < .0001$). Girls tended to participate more than boys ($F(1,58222) = 49.57$, $p < .0001$), and participation was much lower in 1992 than in 1972 or 1982 ($F(2,58222) = 220.84$, $p < .0001$). While girls participated more than boys regardless of race, this gap was most evident for Whites and African Americans ($F(4,58222) = 13.62$, $p < .0001$), and least evident for Asian students. Additionally, participation declined differentially over time across the racial groups, with African American and Native American participation decreasing the most across the three observation points, and least for White and Asian students ($F(8,58222) = 16.53$, $p < .0001$). Finally, this last effect was qualified by sex to produce a significant three-way interaction ($F(8,58222) = 2.16$, $p < .03$), which is presented in Table 14.5.

Table 14.5. Participation in School-Based Extracurricular Activities, 1972–1992

Group	*1972*	*1982*	*1992*	*Change*
Boys				
African American	2.38	2.13	1.26	–1.26
Native American	2.12	2.01	0.97	–1.15
Latino	2.10	1.90	1.32	–0.78
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.90	1.73	1.45	–0.45
White	1.83	1.70	1.29	–0.54
Girls				
African American	2.69	2.57	1.56	–1.13
Native American	2.12	2.35	1.51	–0.61
Latina	2.02	2.20	1.37	–0.65
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.90	1.79	1.57	–0.33
White	2.32	2.26	1.57	–0.75

Note: Numbers reflect average number of school-based extracurricular activities students participated in.

In the three-way interaction, participation for boys of color dropped more dramatically than participation for girls of color. Participation for White girls dropped more dramatically than that of White boys, although they still participate at higher levels overall. In sum, these data coincide with the data suggesting that identification with academics has dropped significantly for boys of color in recent decades.

Summary

Despite significant progress in promoting racial equality and access to education for minority students, African American, Native American, and Latino boys have shown a significant decrease in the identification with academics, while White and Asian boys showed little change. Girls tended to show increasing identification (except White girls, who showed no change), although some increases were modest (e.g., African American girls).

These changes were also reflected in engagement behaviors. Boys of color showed larger decreases in extracurricular participation than White and Asian boys, while for girls only African American girls showed a substantial change in participation above that of White and Asian girls.

In sum, these data reflect two different patterns of results, qualified by gender. Boys of color show evidence of increasing psychological and physical withdrawal from school and academics across the time span studied, while the changes for White students tended to be relatively minimal. Girls of color tended to show increasing identification with academics and, while they show a pattern of decreasing extracurricular participation, the changes in the engagement behaviors leave them participating more than the boys.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to examine trends in identification with academics among high school seniors over the 20-year period from 1972 to 1992. While some evidence suggests that we might have expected a pattern of increasing identification with academics for minority students, there were mixed results. Boys of color (African American, Latino, Native American) showed reduced identification with academics in 1992 compared to 1972, while White and Asian/Pacific Islander boys showed no significant differences. It is interesting to note that in 1972, boys from almost all groups showed academics to be significantly related to their self-perceptions. These trends are mirrored in the analyses on participation in school-based extracurricular activities, our measure of engagement, where boys of color tended to show larger decreases in engagement than other groups, and ultimately ended up less favorable in both areas.

Girls showed different trends. Girls of color tended toward increasing identification with academics, (although not all trends were statistically significant), while White girls showed no significant differences. Participation, similarly, mirrored the general trend in identification—three groups of girls who had positive trends in identification also had the least decrease in participation (Native American, Latina, and Asian/ Pacific Islander students). White girls, who had no significant trend, had the second greatest decrease in participation, while African American girls showed the greatest trend, despite a trend toward increasing identification.

If one is convinced that identification with academics is interesting or important, then these results are important and a bit discouraging. After decades of social engineering to affect societal change and promote social equality among students, not only are educational outcomes still different as a function of race, but this study shows that the psychological and behavioral variables that are plausibly related to academic outcomes are showing trends toward worsening, not improving, at least for boys of color. As Newmann (1981) argued that a psychological connection to academics is a necessary condition for learning (see also Finn, 1989), and as identification with academics is theoretically linked to motivation and theoretically and empirically linked to cognitive and behavioral variables affecting academic outcomes, as well as the actual academic outcomes themselves, these findings suggest that the basic conditions necessary for success in education are being undermined, at least for boys of color (who also tend to be the most at risk for adverse outcomes in other segments of our society).

Theoretical Explanations

After decades of integration and desegregation, multicultural curriculum implementation, textbook revision, and dozens of other efforts at social engineering with a goal toward promotion of social justice, why is it that we are finding results such as the ones presented here? And why are there gender differences in these observed trends? There are literally dozens of potential explanations. There is no way to cover all of them here, nor the probable interactions between multiple factors present. This section is intended only for brief consideration of a limited number of potential hypotheses. Future research will have to address this issue more thoroughly.

The thorniest issue is going to be attempting to explain why these trends are moderated by sex. As Bruce Hare (e.g., 1985) notes, too often research in education or psychology examines the effect of race or sex, but not their interaction. Thus, we have discussions of racial trends and gender trends, but less common are these factors separated out from each other. It is likely that any examination of the above-noted effects will incorporate the changing role of, expectations for, and assumptions about women and girls in our society. Over the period from 1972 to 1992 in America, there has been significant changes in these areas. This positive movement for girls and women might be buffering or protecting girls against whatever factors are affecting boys of color.

There are several possibilities regarding the decreasing identification with academics among boys of color. First, Steele (1997) has argued that disidentification is a result of anxiety over confirming negative group stereotypes in the classroom. It is possible that if group stereotypes of intellectual inferiority were to become more negative over the observation period, one would expect this sort of trend. However, there is no evidence to suggest this has occurred.

Ogbu (1992) has argued that as long as these groups (especially Native Americans and African Americans) feel subjugated, they will continue to rebel against things Whites value, thus inhibiting members of these groups from identifying with academics. However, there is no reason to believe that members of these groups feel more subjugated or compelled to rebel more in contemporary times than in 1972. Another suggestion from Ogbu's writings is that if there is no perceived connection between educational attainment and future rewards (i.e., job attainment and advancement, salary, success, etc.), then academics will not be valued by members of these groups. While the popular opinion in America seems to be that many glass ceilings and sources of discrimination have been eliminated, it is not altogether clear that this is in fact the case, or is even perceived to be the case by these subjugated groups. If this perceived lack of contingency has gotten worse over the period observed, one would expect the type of results observed.

Another possible set of culprits are the reforms themselves. Specifically, while there has been a great effort to implement multicultural curricula in American schools, Grant and Sleeter (1985) argued that most curricula have not been multicultural in nature (integration of information about the contributions and perspectives of different cultural groups into the entire curriculum) but rather ethnic studies, which usually take the form of curricular add-ons or substitutions (e.g., Black History Month). Cursory examinations of textbooks, curricula, and classrooms support this argument. This add-on approach to curricular reform, according to Steele (1997), does not to make the educational environment friendlier to minority students. Rather, *this approach serves to reinforce these students' feeling that they are not part of the mainstream but isolated and separate.* This would serve to exacerbate the issues underlying selective devaluing, rather than ameliorating them. Steele argues that only a true multicultural curriculum, with minorities truly integrated into the mainstream curriculum, will reverse this trend. Further research, however, is needed to show empirical support for this notion.

In the end, we are left with some disturbing findings and little theoretical or empirical evidence to explain them. Research in this area is urgently needed.

Counteracting or Preventing Disidentification

Several authors have begun discussions of ways to counteract or prevent disidentification in minority students (e.g., Osborne, 2001; Steele, 1997; Wolfe & Spencer, 1996). Suggestions include changes that can be made on an individual classroom level, or on a more macro level. Briefly, suggested changes include alteration in how students are remediated, changing how multicultural education is implemented (see also Grant & Sleeter, 1985), and encouraging educators to take more proactive roles in diffusing and debunking stereotypes (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1997). Ogbu (e.g., 1992) has also suggested changes such as helping minority students separate attitudes and behaviors that are instrumental in school success from those that lead to "acting White" (cf., Fordham, 1988), helping students to avoid interpreting academic success as a threat to their social identity, instituting programs that help students adopt the strategy of "accommodation without assimilation" (helping students recognize that they can participate in two frames of reference or cultural milieu without losing their own cultural identity), and increasing the perceived contingency between academic excellence and external rewards (e.g., jobs, advancement, income, etc.). Furthermore, Ogbu has suggested that these students' communities can help in these endeavors by insisting that students take responsibility for their educational outcomes and reconnecting their middle-class members with their communities.

There are many facets of this problem that can be attacked, and individuals and communities can make a substantial difference in this arena. Thus, the hopeful aspect of this problem is that many people are beginning to take up this discussion and provide concrete suggestions for diffusing it.

Caveats

There are several weaknesses in this study. First, as the data were not expressly gathered for the purpose of testing this hypothesis, the variables present were not ideal. For example, no direct measure of identification with academics was available. Further research, such as Osborne and Rausch (2001), that directly measures these constructs is needed.

A corollary to the previous measurement issue is that in this study grades were assessed via self-report measures. There might be some question as to whether self-report grades are accurate and reliable or biased and therefore invalid. There are several responses to this. First, in the author's view it is appropriate that self-perceived grades are used, as it is the relationship between perceived reality and self-view, not objective reality, that is most proximal given the self-esteem framework in which this study is grounded. In other words, a student for whom academics are central should have lower self-esteem if he or she perceives that they are faring poorly, regardless of objective reality. Similarly, a student for whom academics are central should have higher self-esteem if they perceive they are doing well, again regardless of objective reality. In fact, it does appear that perceived reality and objective reality were fairly concordant. Ancillary analyses of the NELS data found that correlations between self-reported grades and the most objective assessment of actual achievement, achievement test scores, correlated strongly (*r*s ranging from .51 to .65, all *p*s < .0001, across different achievement tests). This is encouraging, given that these two variables (grades in high school and achievement test scores) are not measuring the same construct and the number of factors that influence grades aside from academic aptitude.

A final weakness of this study is that there are no data available to test various theoretical explanations for the results. As there are many possible competing hypotheses, this should be a fruitful area for future research.

Directions for Future Research

This problem needs attention if we are to achieve some measure of social justice in our society. Research is needed to identify which students are placed most at risk for selective devaluing, and how to intervene to reduce the probability of disidentification, or reverse disidentification already taking place.

Toward this last end, Steele and colleagues have embarked on an ambitious initiative to reduce devaluing and disidentification among college students, a program modeled after Urie Treisman's successes in encouraging students of color to excel in calculus (see Steele, 1997). Other initiatives need to be developed and evaluated.

Additionally, as mentioned previously, more research is needed to specify the factors responsible for this historical change in identification with academics. Without understanding the mechanism behind the change, little can be done to thwart its progress.

Conclusions

This chapter presents evidence for a historical trend toward decreasing identification with academics among boys of color across a 20-year time span (1972 to 1992). The results, in combination with previous research, suggest that boys of color are at particularly high risk for adverse academic outcomes (at least partially) due to decreasing identification with academics, which should be linked to motivation to succeed in academics, and cognitive and behavioral variables related to academic outcomes, which in turn should be linked to actual academic outcomes. Fortunately, authors are beginning to offer concrete suggestions for ameliorating the problem. Equally fortunately, these suggestions can often be implemented by individual teachers or schools without wholesale societal reform. Thus, there may be some significant hope that this problem can be immediately attacked, placing future generations of students of color in a position to be more successful.

AUTHOR NOTE

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CHAPTER 15

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

An Examination of Issues in Enhancing the Academic Achievement of African American Pre-College Students

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INTRODUCTION

Although history clearly indicates that elementary, middle, and secondary educational institutions have consistently failed to educate African American children adequately, the initial school reform efforts of the early 1980s made little attempt to address their needs. Within the last decade, an increasing number of school reforms have been specifically directed at African American children, especially those residing in poor urban communities. While some of these efforts have demonstrated success in enhancing African American children's academic achievement, others have not. The overall picture is mixed because of a variety of factors. Some

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reforms are short-lived or are governed more by political and financial exigencies than the needs of poor African American children. Many other reforms are not accompanied by adequate research that documents and evaluates their implementation.

Despite these overall problems, efforts to develop educational models aimed at overcoming the failures of traditional school practices to support African American students' academic achievement continue to flourish. As we enter the 21st century it is possible to identify a plethora of initiatives, programs, and models that purport to enhance the academic achievement of African American and other poor children of color, particularly those living in urban neighborhoods. Often, each of these initiatives, programs, and models is touted as the one having the greatest potential to achieve this goal. In other words, one size (or intervention) is expected to fit all.

The notion that one can present interventions aimed at African American students as if one size fits all is not limited to the ways in which school reforms aimed at them have been presented. This one size notion also pertains to the very ways in which African American and other poor children are identified and categorized in schools and society. Thus the tendency to frame poor African American children as "at risk" places them in a category that is not only devaluing but also limits recognition of their assets and individuality. Similarly, interventions for these categorized children often are framed in such a way that they do not empower them to see themselves as achievers.

It is our contention that no single educational reform effort is likely to be effective for all African American children, or for that matter, for all members of any other population. This is because any attempt to intervene with a large population must take into account not only differences within the population, but also specific circumstances and contexts that inevitably color the implementation of an intervention at a particular place and time. Thus, we argue, it is probably fruitless to search for the one best program, initiative, or model. On the other hand, we suggest that there may be some common elements across quite different reform efforts that contribute to African American students' achievement.

In this chapter we discuss two quite dissimilar educational interventions aimed at enhancing academic achievement in two different groups of African American pre-college students. Each of these interventions was successful in its particular context. We describe the particular factors that contributed to the success of each of these interventions. In addition, we link the results of our research with the theorizing of other scholars to identify some underlying general factors that support high academic achievement among African American students.

We begin this chapter with a brief review of literature on African American school achievement and interventions to enhance it. This will be followed by brief case studies of the interventions on which we conducted our research and the relevance of our findings for larger issues of educational reform aimed at African American students. We conclude with a discussion of fundamental issues that must be addressed in further research and practice aimed at enhancing academic achievement among African American students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The evidence is clear and compelling. Although African Americans have made major gains in educational attainment, their academic performance continues to lag. Since 1964, the percent of African Americans who have completed high school has almost doubled, from 45% to just over 82% (Miller, 1995). However, over approximately the same time period, researchers have found a consistent gap between African Americans and Hispanics, on one hand, and Asians and European Americans, on the other hand, in measures of academic achievement (Miller, 1995). For example, Garibaldi (1997) reports a consistent gap of 25–30 points between African American and European American students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) measures during the 20-year period from the 1970s through the 1990s. This researcher also indicates that the gap in reading achievement between these two groups averaged 30 points during this same period.

A large body of literature has focused on the academic achievement of African American students. Much of it has sought to explain the reasons for the persistent achievement gap. Much of this literature can be characterized by a tendency to locate the causes of African American students' academic performance in relatively specific individual and institutional factors while paying much less attention to larger systemic issues, which impact on them also.

For example, many researchers have argued that internal, psychological factors such as motivations and self-perceptions explain the differences between African American and White students' achievement (Bempechat, 1998; Ford, 1992; Justice, Lindsey, & Morrow, 1999; Osborne, 1997). This research suggests, for example, that African American children may be more likely to develop doubts about their ability to achieve in certain situations, or that they may come to believe that academic achievement will have relatively little impact on their lives. As a result, they may diminish the effort expended on schoolwork.

Other researchers have focused on the roles African American children's families and peers may play in fostering or hindering their school performance (Battle, 1997, 1998; Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Loury, 1999; Phillips, Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Crane, 1998; Taylor, Graham, & Hudley, 1997). With respect to families, Battle (1997) has suggested that family structure may be associated with academic achievement among African Americans. Others, such as Loury (1999) and Phillips and colleagues (1998) have argued that parents' own educational experiences, the types of activities they engage in with their children, and their aspirations and expectations for them may have an impact on children's school performance.

The research on the impact of peers on achievement is somewhat contradictory. Some have suggested that African American children create a peer culture that is in opposition to high academic achievement and positive school-related behavior (Fordham, 1996; Taylor et. al, 1997). However, other researchers have found that peers are less influential or that their influence is mediated by the particular context in which they operate (Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Datnow & Cooper, 1997).

Another large body of research has focused on the impact of school factors on achievement. Much of this research has focused on specific classroom factors, particularly on the actions and attitudes of teachers. Several researchers have agued that, as the primary organizer of the classroom, the teacher's perceptions of his/her students may have an important impact on their orientation toward school and achievement. Some particular factors have to do with the expectations teachers hold of African American children (Ferguson, 1998) and their beliefs about these students' academic performance, (Irving & York, 1993). A related factor has to do with teachers' ability to use a culturally responsive pedagogy with African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

More recently, some researchers have attempted to analyze the broader institutional roles that schools serving poor, urban African American children take, particularly with respect to the maintenance of existing patterns of power and privilege in American society (Anyon, 1997; Lipman, 1998). These researchers have placed the locus of African American children's low levels of academic achievement on broader systemic factors that local schools support, either overtly or covertly, rather than on the child's individual, family, and peer characteristics.

Just as research focusing on explaining the reasons for the low levels of academic achievement among African American students has centered on individual, family, and school factors, so have many interventions aimed at enhancing their school performance. Some researchers have argued for major changes in the ways that schools operate and interact with children (Davidson, 1996). Several other investigators have argued that effective interventions to enhance African American students' achievement must have a multifaceted approach (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Epstein, 1995; Epstein, Coates, Salines, Sanders, & Simons, 1997). These researchers have suggested that schools need to work collaboratively with children's families and institutions within their neighborhoods to enhance African American students' achievement.

The ever-increasing amount of data demonstrating that contemporary public schools have not been effective in enhancing African American children's academic achievement have spawned a variety of reform efforts and interventions aimed at reversing the pattern of school failure among this group. Many of these reforms have been based upon the notion that "one size fits all." According to Weiner (2000), such reform efforts use a "service delivery" perspective that suggests that they can be packaged and enacted across schools, regardless of context. We believe this type of model is insufficient. There have been a variety of educational interventions that have been highly successful in developing and supporting an ethos of high academic performance among African American children. Unfortunately, many of these models of success have not been documented adequately. In the next section of this chapter, we describe two educational interventions we have been closely involved with. As will be seen, even though both of these interventions have successfully supported high academic achievement among African American children, they are, on the surface, quite dissimilar in terms of their approach, their target audiences, and the strategies implemented.

ENHANCING AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT WITH AN AFRICAN-CENTERED APPROACH

Among the various strategies advocated to support African American children's achievement, a recurring theme has been that educational experiences should be encapsulated within African and African American cultural and historical traditions. Such encapsulation, it is argued, is likely to enhance African American children's academic achievement because it centers learning around their own history and culture rather than someone else's (Asante, 1992). African-centered educational approaches make Africa and the African Diaspora the center of knowledge and instruction and emphasize the contributions that people of African descent and their culture have made to the world (Eyo, 1991). African-centered approaches attempt to provide more accurate and thorough depictions of Africans in Africa as well as throughout the African Diaspora than what is usually presented in traditional educational orientations (Akoto, 1994). Furthermore, Asante (1991–92) argues that African-centered educational approaches allow African American children to see learning and schooling as an integral part of their cultural heritage, thus empowering them with the confidence and motivation to strive for achievement. Conversely, an African-centered approach provides an alternative to the negative intellectual and social stereotypes of Africa and African Americans that children are bombarded with in daily life as well as in more traditionally Eurocentric schools.

African-centered educational orientations are not new; in the United States they have existed for hundreds of years (Ratteray, 1994). However, traditionally, African-centered schools were largely confined to the private school sector. Toward the end of the 20th century, there was some movement to implement African-centered orientations in public schools and in 1990, in one large Midwestern urban district, these schools were recommended as one of several remedies to that district's overwhelming failure to educate its African American student population effectively (Pollard & Ajirotutu, 2000). Although this recommendation resulted in considerable national as well as local controversy, it was accepted by the district's school board and two African-centered schools, called African American Immersion schools, were established; one, an elementary school and the other, a middle school.

As part of the plan for implementing these schools, Diane Pollard and Cheryl Ajirotutu agreed to undertake a long-term, in-depth study aimed at documenting and evaluating this innovative experiment. We established the African American Immersion Schools Evaluation Project, an interdisciplinary, holistic, participatory longitudinal study of the initial implementation and outcomes of these two schools. Our work was interdisciplinary in that it made use of our backgrounds in educational psychology and anthropology. It was holistic in that we focused on the entire school organization. Finally, it was participatory because we worked closely with the staff of the schools to help shape many aspects of the study.

We spent six years in these schools. Our activities included structured annual interviews as well as frequent informal conversations with school staff and students. In addition, we conducted systematic observations of school and classroom activities and interviewed parents, district administrators, and individuals in the local community who became involved with these schools. In our book, *African Centered Schooling in Theory and Practice* (Pollard & Ajirotutu, 2000), we have described the context within which these schools were conceived and implemented and analyzed the initial five years of their implementation, focusing on the perceptions of school staff as well as our own observations.

Although the information we gathered demonstrated that an African-centered educational model could be a successful one for supporting African American students' academic achievement, our study also indicated that one size might not fit all when contextual constraints are taken into account. Both of these schools served student populations that were very similar in all aspects except age. They were located in the same general neighborhood of the city. Over 99% of the students at both schools were

African American. In addition, the schools served families who were poor, in large part as a result of a period of massive deindustrialization experienced in this city along with welfare reform measures that increased many families' economic struggles. Finally, before being designated as African-centered schools, both schools were characterized as low-achieving schools, as measured by students' performance on standardized test scores and other assessments by the district.

Despite their similarities, however, the implementation and outcomes of these schools was markedly different. The elementary school was, by many measures, successful both in organizing and institutionalizing a strong African-centered orientation and in raising the achievement levels of its students. During the initial six years that this school implemented an African-centered approach, it moved from the position of being one of the lowest achieving schools in the district to among the highest. Furthermore, it has continued to support academic achievement among its students.

In contrast, the middle school was unable to institutionalize a school-wide African-centered educational orientation, although some individual teachers did so. Furthermore, the patterns of academic achievement at the middle school were fairly inconsistent during the initial five years it operated as an African-centered school. We concluded that the middle school was unable to institutionalize an African-centered orientation because of a number of internal challenges and external threats (Pollard & Ajirotutu, 2000). In other words, internal and external contextual conditions facilitated the implementation of this reform effort at the elementary school. However, a quite different contextual milieu constrained implementation at the middle school.

Based on our research, we concluded that the elementary school was able to make an African-centered educational approach successful in fostering and supporting academic achievement for several reasons. Important among them were the staff's expectations for high academic achievement in the students and their willingness to organize their pedagogy and curriculum to foster student learning. Shortly after the elementary school began operating as an African-centered school, the principal articulated her expectations for students' academic success. This belief was shared with the school staff that chose to teach at this school. The staff was required to complete 18 college credits in African and African American history and culture within three years as a condition of remaining at the school. These teachers decided to take classes as a cohort and met this requirement quickly. Many of the teachers reported that having to return to school and become learners about African and African American history and culture, themselves, not only enhanced knowledge and disrupted stereotypes, but also led them to change some of their pedagogical strategies so that they became more effective with their students. Thus, over the period of our study, we observed staff members who not only developed high expectations for academic success in their students, but also became increasingly adept at translating these expectations into pedagogical and curricular practices (Pollard & Ajirotutu, 2000).

At the African-centered elementary school, African and African American history and culture became closely associated with notions of scholarship and learning. The school identified itself as a community of learners and there was consensus among the staff that there were close links between cultural knowledge and pride on one hand and high academic achievement on the other. This idea of a close association between African and African American culture and academic success was presented to these African American students consistently and regularly. It is important to note that it is this very association that is often ignored or even denigrated in many schools serving African American students as well as the broader society.

PROJECT EXCEL

If the experiences of marginality, otherness, and their relationship to the "mythical norm" (Lorde, 1984, cited in Tatum, 1997, p. 27) in education are to be better understood, then an examination of the social and cultural relations as well as representations of self that occur in school settings must be conducted. Understanding how educationally disadvantaged adolescents—comprised predominately but not exclusively of African Americans—who had the potential to attend college defined themselves as "scholars" and the possible relationship of such a definition to their achievement became the focus of the nine-year longitudinal study conducted by Olga Welch and Carolyn Hodges. By educationally disadvantaged we meant those students who had the potential and the desire to attend college, but for whom performance and educational background proved obstacles. Like Ferguson (1993), we believe that identity development in educationally disadvantaged adolescents, particularly those of color, involves issues of marginality and otherness, which must be explored if appropriate academic interventions are to be developed. Indeed, other researchers have examined complex issues of identity construction within students who, whether based on race, gender, class, or ableness, define themselves or are defined as being on the margins of school (Apple, 1990; Cross, 1991; Hall, 1992; Hudak, 1992; McCarthy, 1990). However, we chose to situate our work within a construct, that is, scholar identity, which emerged in our own academic development.

My colleague, Carolyn Hodges, a professor at the same institution, had been identified early as college material, as had I. We found that our ability to succeed academically even in the face of systematic racial and gender barriers involved the development of a "scholar identity." This scholar identity, which we both traced to adolescence, evolved as a series of negotiations and reconstructions of our identities that we used to counteract stereotypical messages of Black intellectual inferiority and the consequent limited career and educational options. The powerful nature of the scholar self in our own academic lives became the catalyst for the nine-year investigation of the relationship between academic achievement and identity construction presented in our book, *Standing Outside on the Inside: Black Adolescents and the Construction of Academic Identity* (Welch & Hodges, 1997). Our study placed academic achievement at its center and used McClelland's seminal definition of achievement motivation as a point of departure. McClelland's definition suggests that achievement motivation exists as a "stable personality trait possessed only by those individuals whose culture (including race, environment, child-rearing practices, religious values, and social class) stress competition with standards of excellence" (McClelland, 1953, cited in Castenell, 1984, p. 436). For us, this definition failed to account for individuals who succeeded academically despite disadvantaged backgrounds. It also implied that achievement motivation could not be cultivated in some populations, even if academic enrichment was provided and thereby called into question the premise that such enrichment can significantly improve post-secondary admissions for educationally disadvantaged African American adolescents.

Working with three small cohorts (10–13 students) of primarily though not exclusively African American adolescents in two high schools, we conducted our study of the relationship between pre-college enrichment experiences and the development of an academic ethos (scholar identity), first in a summer school/university enrichment program we designed and later as part of the college preparatory curriculum in the center city school from which most of the study participants were drawn. The study, Project EXCEL (Encouraging Excellence in Children Extends Learning), examined the development of scholar identity in juniors (first cohort) and sophomores (second and third cohorts) who identified themselves and were identified as college bound by teachers and guidance counselors. The first cohort consisted of rising juniors who participated in a university-sponsored enrichment program that emphasized reading, writing, and foreign language study (either German or French). Based on the findings from the pilot study with the first cohort, both the second and third cohorts were composed of rising sophomores. Because of the three-fold emphasis on reading, writing, and foreign language study, the program had cross-disciplinary implications because admission to and persistence in college are related to the ability to read and write and because proficiency in a foreign language has been proven to increase literacy in the native language. In designing the study, our questions were:

1. Can a transition program build academic ethos (scholar identity) in educationally disadvantaged African American and European American college-bound students?
2. What combination of subjects and classroom experiences are most critical to the development of academic ethos?

The focus on these questions represented our hypothesis that, in addition to potential and appropriate pre-college preparation, educationally disadvantaged adolescents had to develop their own definitions of scholarship in order to achieve academically. Even with White adolescents who presumably enjoy White privilege (McIntosh, 1992), development of definitions of scholarship could not be assumed to emerge and be uniform. Rather, if they emerged, they had to represent the students' personally constructed commitments to and definitions of excellence. This development of self-constructed definitions of the scholar that evolve as a result of academic study became central to all of the goals in Project EXCEL. Moreover, in exploring this concept of scholar identity, we chose to concentrate on students who did not represent those with the highest academic qualifications. Instead, the participants in all three cohorts were those students who expressed a desire to attend college and who exhibited academic promise but who did not always achieve the grade point averages or standardized test scores generally used as strong predictors of college success. Nor were all of these students economically disadvantaged. Some were the children of college graduates, while others had parents and/or relatives who held clerical jobs, worked in construction, or held entry-level managerial positions.

Our decision to work with these students was not accidental. Rather, it represented the opportunity to test our tacit theory that the development of an identity grounded in scholarship required, in addition to course work, role modeling, and study skills, the student's ownership of his/her construction of scholarship and evolution as a scholar. This meant that along with potential and appropriate pre-college preparation, educationally disadvantaged African American adolescents had to develop a personal commitment to excellence that emerged as they engaged in challenging intellectual tasks and career goal setting. We refer to this commitment as "scholar ethos," that is, an academic identity that promotes achievement based on a recognition that exclusion from educational opportunities may be unrelated to either potential or performance.

To go against the stereotype for EXCEL students meant building this identity by intentionally engaging in individual explorations of the meaning of scholar and scholarship in concert with an academic program of study that sought to provide the skills in reading, writing, and foreign language study needed to succeed in college regardless of the major chosen.

In designing the course of study in EXCEL, deliberate attention was given to these literacy components rather than to equally important math, science, or computer studies because of their cross-curriculum application, for to matriculate successfully in a post-secondary institution students must possess the ability to articulate their ideas in both oral and written communication in a wide variety of courses.

We believed that EXCEL students, armed with these skills and their individually crafted definitions of scholarship of themselves as scholars, might undertake the "border-crossing" activities advocated by Giroux (1992), such as the ability to use formal or informal English, depending on the conversational context and the behavioral expectations attached. This border crossing makes explicit for students the culture or power that members of marginalized groups must understand if they are to integrate with mainstream culture without relinquishing their own cultures (Collins, 1993).

The term "culture of power" is used to draw attention to the premise that certain ways of self-representation, of talking, interacting, and writing, for example, can serve to facilitate or hinder an individual's chances for success within mainstream institutions. When an institution is dominated by individuals from the majority culture, facility with that culture, the culture of power can contribute to a minority person's chances for success. Often the culture-of-home advocates' failure to acknowledge the importance of minority students' access to the culture of power leads to minority parents' resistance to a curriculum and instruction that promotes, exclusively, the culture of the home. Success in institutions—schools, workplaces, and so on—is predicated upon acquisition of the culture of those who are in power. Children from middle-class homes tend to do better in school than those from non-middle-class homes because the culture of school is based on the culture of the upper and middle classes, of those in power (Delpit, 1995).

Inherent in our own development of scholar ethos was an understanding of schools and schooling that made explicit the culture of power described by Collins (1993) and Delpit (1995). Thus, with EXCEL students we viewed the construction of their own scholar identities as a possible counterbalance to the negative messages of Black intellectual inferiority that they might encounter. We further conjectured that, depending on its use, scholar identity might likewise become a mechanism of student agency, since to be Black and a success in America is largely viewed as an exception, a departure from the rule, an aberration. It is a view that skews Black ambition and blinds White perceptions, for it is a vision still clouded in the pathology of race. Race, perhaps more significantly, also shapes expectations and assumptions—what we think we can and cannot be. And it is very often low expectations—Black ability, for Black possibility—that both limits and drives Black ambition (Edwards & Polite, 1992).

Thus, some EXCEL students undertook academic work from which evolved a personalized construction of scholarship. Their interviews (while they participated in the program and during the first year after graduation) suggested a belief that relinquishing their cultural self was unnecessary for successful matriculation in schools. Nor did they identify a conflict between the academic self and cultural self, termed "acting White," suggested in a study by Fordham and Ogbu (1986, cited in Wang & Gordon, 1994). Instead, our findings indicate that in concert with an increased and individual efficacy in reading, writing, and foreign language, for some EXCEL students, the scholar identity became part of an oppositional identity (Cross, 1991) that they used to confront messages of academic inferiority and/or racial discrimination.

Students from the first two cohorts were taken from two high schools (Ryan and Augustana), the first with a "mixed" population (60% African American, 40% European American) and the second with a 98% African American population. By the time the second cohort had finished high school, Ryan High School had been closed by the city and the students dispersed to other area high schools. With the third cohort, the program moved from being a summer enrichment, university-based context to being based throughout the academic year at Augustana High School.

When the program moved to Augustana, Project EXCEL became part of the standard college preparatory curriculum. We held planning meetings with the administration and faculty of Augustana, provided college-level materials in English, French, and German that mirrored those given to first- and second-year students at the local university, and provided in-service training on the EXCEL model to the college preparatory teachers in sophomore, junior, and senior level classes. We conducted interviews with EXCEL students, their parents, and these teachers as well as arranged classroom observations (English/German/French). Hopefully, this marked the beginning of the institutionalization of a program that explicitly emphasized a culture of academic achievement in a predominately African American school.

DISCUSSION

At the outset, it may appear that these two interventions are quite dissimilar. The differences are evident not only in the age levels and backgrounds of the students we worked with, but also ostensibly in the structure and orientations of the interventions themselves. However, we argue that these two apparently dissimilar interventions shared several very important fundamental characteristics. The cornerstone of both Project EXCEL and the African-centered elementary school is their focus on counterbalancing the labeling, negative messages about academic achievement, and implications of inferiority that so often accompany discussions of academic achievement in African American students.

THE RUMOR OF INFERIORITY

Lipman (1998) suggests that research in sociology and anthropology of education over the past 20 years has advanced numerous explanations for the low achievement and alienation of students of color and of African Americans in particular. Some of these explanations focus on the cultural mismatches between minority students and schools, lack of cultural synchronization between African American students specifically and the norms of schools (Irvine, 1990), unequal resources (Kozol, 1991), teachers' ideologies (Grant, 1984; King, 1993), and student responses to racial subordination (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, cited in Wang & Gordon, 1994) and cultural marginalization (Fordham, 1988).

While useful, these theories provide only partial lenses through which to examine the complexities associated with achievement within as heterogeneous a racial group as African Americans. Moreover, as Gay (2000) reminds us, the improvements in academic achievement that we seek cannot be realized without systemic reforms that deal with the multiple aspects of achievement (academic, social, psychological, emotional, etc.) within different subject areas (math, science, reading, writing, social studies), across school levels (pre-kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high schools), and through different aspects of the educational enterprise (curriculum, instruction, administration, assessment, financing, etc.). Gay further asserts that such reforms also need to be diversified according to the social variance of students, attending deliberately and conscientiously to such factors as gender, social class, historical experiences, and linguistic capabilities.

In a research context in which the achievement among African Americans is examined as if the group were monolithic rather than diverse, our own research suggests that such a distillation ignores the constellation of factors that might account for the variability of achievement among this group. Indeed, we believe that lingering deficit models of achievement continue to reinforce the "rumor of inferiority" about African American students' ability to succeed with the result that even as they are encouraged to ask for help from teachers and researchers, these same teachers and researchers use that information as evidence of the students' inferiority.

Murray and Fairchild (1989, cited in Gay, 2000) maintain that underachievement in African American students has its basis in both macro- and micro-level impediments. At the macro level, they cite the history of systematic inequality in educational opportunity in concert with political and economic disenfranchisement as contributing factors to African American underachievement. These conditions along with theoretical models of genetic deficits, cultural deprivation, and cultural difference have served to reinforce existing negative stereotypes of African Americans as intellectually inferior.

At the micro level, these conditions have resulted in lowered expectations by teachers of African American students. As this perception was internalized, it reinforced the belief among some African American students that they exercised little control over their environment. In school they were rewarded and liked when their underachievement supported the stereotype. Conversely, for those African American students who performed at unexpectedly higher levels, there was less support from both teachers and peers. "Acting White" became the explanation as well as the condemnation for pursuing academic excellence.

Not surprisingly, this has led some African American students to adopt dysfunctional achievement behavior; for example, the use of "self-handicapping" strategies" (Murray & Fairchild, 1989, cited in Gay, 2000). These are actions or choices of performance that make it easier to excuse failure by blaming it on forces beyond one's control. For some African American students, this means that unfinished work or unmet deadlines can be attributed to circumstances external to the individual. Therefore, there is a failure to assume responsibility for those circumstances. Moreover, when success occurs, it is likely to be ascribed to an unrealistic appraisal of ability because it has been attained despite external impediments.

Underachievers receive the message that they are inferior, unworthy, or incompetent, a view reinforced by the subtle messages of racism and the lack of educational parity found in the greater society (Murray & Fairchild, 1989, cited in Gay, 2000). For too many African American students, this translates into half-hearted attempts at scholarship and the adoption of even more sophisticated self-handicapping strategies.

More recent research (Landrine & Klonoff, cited in Gay, 2000) suggests that these self-handicapping strategies also affect even the most academically successful African American students. Steele and Aronson (1995, cited in Gay, 2000) have identified an effect called the "stereotype threat," which is defined as "the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one's self definition" (Steele, 1997, cited in Gay, 2000, p. 616). This stereotype threat is even more striking among those students who care most about performing well. Indeed, these researchers found that the allegations about African Americans' intellectual inability created an additional self-threat, which interfered with their achievement in a number of ways, including the creation of self-consciousness and undue caution, diverting attention to task-irrelevant worries, and, in general, influencing their ability to engage in academic efforts.

Welch and Hodges (1993) identified a similar phenomenon in some of the participants in Project EXCEL, who, while possessing the potential to be admitted to college, resisted establishing majors consistent with their high school preparation. For example, in one instance, a student identified veterinary medicine as the intended college major with only one year of geometry, another of algebra, and only one biology course on her junior transcript. When advised by her counselors that her lack of appropriate pre-college preparation might preclude her acceptance into the major she sought, the student asserted that her "natural ability" with animals demonstrated the potential needed to become a veterinarian, even in the absence of advanced mathematics and science courses. In this case, the student used this line of reasoning to forestall any suggestion that she consider another major.

Fordham (1988) identified a similar phenomenon in the intellectually capable and highly ethnically affiliated African American females in her study. Marginalized by their teachers and peers, these young women devised strategies that increased their "invisibility" and reinforced negative or erroneous perceptions of their academic abilities. These strategies included "intentional silence" wherein they employed minimal or laconic responses to inquiries or refrained from offering any response.

As Gay (2000) suggests, such "double dealing," or being at once highly ethnically affiliated and academically achieving, can take a terrible toll on students when the two agendas are not complementary, as is frequently the case in conventional schools. Whether engaging in "double dealing" or simply "opting out" the "rumor of inferiority" first described by Howard and Hammond (1985, as cited in Gay, 2000) can implicate African American students in an academic self-fulfilling prophecy of underachievement that perpetuates existing deficit and "at-risk" models.

THE POWER OF LABELS

Another negative message that frustrates African American children's attempts to achieve in school and society comes from the use of labels used to identify them. According to Hudak (2001), "[L]abeling is a complex process of differentiation, identification, and separation, both of objects (such as commodities for purchase) and of people" (p. 14). Hudak makes a distinction between "benign" and "toxic" labeling, indicating that toxic labeling involves processes that both exploit people and block their efforts to express their own interests and talents. Furthermore, according to

Hudak, toxic labeling is closely tied into relations of power where the privileged can label those who are oppressed.

Fenwick (1996) provides a clear example of toxic labeling in an analysis of African Americans' exploitation by schools. Fenwick argues that schools have labeled African American students as both deviant and inferior. This allows schools to justify the limitation of resources to schools populated by African Americans while simultaneously blaming these students rather than the schools for their low levels of achievement. According to Fenwick, labeling also allows people who hold privileged status in this society to accept oppressive power relations in the society as natural or given.

We contend that historically African American children have been labeled in ways that associated this group with poor academic achievement. Negative labels such as those suggesting that these children are "at risk" or that question their levels of intelligence not only facilitate the provision of inadequate, unequal school experiences for them, they also affect their behavior. For example, Smith (2001) describes a case study of an African American male assigned to a special education class. She dramatically demonstrates not only how this label has a negative impact on this child's sense of self but also the child's inability to remove himself from this oppressive situation. Labeling stifles children's beliefs in their ability; however, studies have indicated that across ethnic groups, high academic achievement is associated with children's beliefs in their own ability (Bempechat, 1998).

Among their other attributes, both of the programs we have studied, the African-centered elementary school and Project EXCEL, provided opportunities for students to develop alternatives to the negative labels that are so often attributed to African Americans, poor students, and others who are systematically disadvantaged in traditional schools. In Project EXCEL, students were encouraged to attach to themselves the label of scholar rather than disadvantaged, at risk, or any of the other pejorative labels usually associated with this population. At the African-centered elementary school, the children were exposed to perspectives on African and African American culture that carried labels that not only were positive but also were associated with high academic achievement. It should not be surprising that in both of these projects the outcomes were more positive than those usually attributed to African American children in more traditional school situations.

In conclusion, the data from both of our research projects suggest the need for a nationwide effort to facilitate the construction of consistent, nurturing environments in which Black youth in particular can become free to pursue and fulfill their intellectual potentials. Clearly, such environments must include interventions that respond to and are appropriate to the particular contexts. Thus "one size" interventions cannot be expected to fit all.

However, some important components are necessary across interventions aimed at encouraging and supporting academic achievement in African American children. First, there is a need for overt community support for academic achievement. Second, children must be freed from the negative messages and labels that constrain them to the bottom of the academic heap. Finally, interventions must help African American children view their intellectual successes as evidence of their abilities. Recognition that they have the ability to be successful academically may also help them distinguish between those situations where failure is the result of their own lack of effort and those where obstacles to their success are unrelated to their abilities or efforts. This should help African American children to take greater responsibility both to strive for academic achievement and fight against continuing injustice and oppression.

As Cosie (1997) reminds us:

> Those who would encourage academic success must, at the outset, acknowledge a harsh reality: that the line separating success from failure—intellectual life from death—can be tissue thin, especially in places where academic aspirations are more often stifled than encouraged. There are many graveyards for intellectual dreams in black and brown America, places where no one needs read *The Bell Curve* to understand how little is expected of him or her, places where achievement is considered unnatural and discouragement lurks at every turn—often in the guise of sympathetic condescension from educators who, certain that most of their pupils will never be scholars, don't dare to challenge the Fates. Many black and brown children are still being told that academic accomplishment is so much beyond them that there is no real purpose in trying. They are receiving that message not only from schools, but, in many cases from everyone around them. (pp. 51–52)

More than 60 years ago, Carter G. Woodson, in his seminal work, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933), predicted that the systematic oppression practiced in the United States would eventually ensure that African Americans would embrace the oppressor's perspective of Black inferiority. Once this myth was accepted, the problem of holding African Americans down would be solved. As Woodson observed,

> When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He will find his "proper place" and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary. (p.xix)

If Woodson's prediction is to be foiled, then researchers must reject a "one size fits all" approach to promoting African American achievement by increasing their awareness of the complex constellation of sociopolitical and educational barriers that continue to hinder Black academic progress.

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